SEVEN HORIZONS

CHARLES J. FINGER

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SEVEN HORIZONS

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SEVEN HORIZONS

BY

CHARLES J. FINGER

ILLUSTRATED

GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK
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FIRST EDITION

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In This Boat We Sailed down the West Coast to Cape Horn Waters

Some Pages from My Island Diary

The Author when Editor of *Reedy's Mirror*

INTRODUCTION

Gayeta Lodge,
Fayetteville,
Jan'y 1, 1930.

My dear Maule:

To-day while packing up galleys and index of *Horizons*, it came to me that the title page should carry some explanatory sub-title, something to indicate that it is no documentary thing but rather in the nature of a *pièce à clef*, an autobiographical romance, indeed, rather than an autobiography. Some sub-title, I hold, is the more necessary because the book touches other men's lives, and the gods forfend that any such experience as befell Miss Cholmondeley should befall me. You recall how she was saluted with, "We all recognized Mrs. Alwys, in your book, and we all say it's not a bit like her."

Again, I would not raise expectations to have them dashed, and expectations may have been raised if certain paragraphs written by well-meaning but mistaken men were taken at full value. For it is the fashion just now, in book advertising and author-boosting, to hint that many craftsmen of letters have led lives of tremendous adventure. The fashion before was the Hobo fashion, when it seemed possible for anyone to get a book printed if he had trod paths favored by victims of neurasthenia, or, as one might say, by paranoiacs with a touch of the pauper in them. Any incompetent who had jumped a train, or hung on to the fringe of a circus, or begged a meal, seemed to be hailed as an artist of distinctive genius. The newer mode is to portray an author as a Marco Polo, or a Barthema, or a Sæwulf. Which reminds me: One well-meaning journalist intending to tell the world that I had been like unto this last, at the time of the publication of my *Tales from Silver Lands*, which could not have been written had it not been for travel in out-of-the-way places, was made to say that I was "a modern Beowulf," a saying that left me swayed by feeling. Sæwulf the pilgrim I could have accepted as passably fair: Beowulf with his inexorable feud, never.

A SUB-TITLE, then, may prevent me from seeming to sail from port under false colors. I would not be accepted temporarily to be rejected later with loud denunciations as a writer of extraordinary voyages, as were Foigny and others in the Seventeenth Century, or thereabouts. Mine is no perverted imagination. Nor would I be accepted to be scorned as always have been those true travelers who return saying that men everywhere are much the same as those at home. Still less would I have people buy this book expecting to find a tale of a doughty doer of daring deeds leaping from one narrow escape to another in the style of *Jack Harkaway*, or of *Buffalo Bill* of Beadle's Half-Dime library. Never have I been the sort to laugh in the face of death. True there may be those who thus laugh, but I hold it shameful for a man to confess himself a football of fate, one sick and uneasy with apprehension all the time. Let me tell you why. It will explain the paucity of adventure in the tales told by true travelers. Your man in lawless lands must needs be watchful of his safety. He must exercise foresight. He must be cautious and serious and earnest, always natural in his intercourse with all sorts and conditions of men. He must not be annoyed easily. He must never meddle with the principles of others, can never indulge in foolish wastefulness or wicked destruction. He must avoid, never court, danger. All that is so true as almost to be platitudinous for men who have been in lawless lands, which is why, to a man, they regard the bulk of adventure books with suspicion. It seems to them that literature of the day concerns itself altogether too much with deeds of violence. But a man need not have traveled to come to a similar conclusion. Let anyone sit down calmly with heaped novels on the floor, then take a pencil and check off the number of murders and other substantial crimes he finds in the pages. Then, tiring, let him count the number of throats that he himself has seen cut, or the number of men he has seen shot in civil life; better still, let him check up the number of times that he himself has planned the cutting of a throat, or the foul murdering of a rival or of a wealthy manufacturer sitting in evening dress in his library. He must come to the conclusion that most men of his acquaintance lead lives of exceptional blamelessness.

A SUB-TITLE is necessary to the end that an intending reader may know that in this book all adventure, all characters, all situations told of are true and incidental to the main thread; and the main thread traces my way through the spiritual jungle of my life, and leads to my religion, taking religion to be a way of life. Indeed, the core of the book lies in the final paragraph, but in getting to that core I have sweat blood in the endeavor to hold fast to fact. Nor has it been easy to hold true to a Polaris. To tell a tale when dealing with fictional personages is easy enough. The author, being a creator, finds himself loving all his creatures equally, those of vulgar passions and coarse appetites, those who labor for ideal ends, those who run shallow; hero or saint or criminal, it does not matter. All alike are the work of his hands and he knows a thrill of love as he regards them. It is far different when one steps out of the realm of moral consciousness. A new responsibility arrives because judicial authority is assumed. The injunction "Judge not!" assumes proportions that become alarming. One commences to question one's own comprehensiveness of view. A realization of responsibility comes because, in a sense, one holds the balances of justice, and the realization of responsibility grows greater with exercised verisimilitude. I point to the Dickens-Hunt-Skimpole affair as example. Or there is the case of Mallock and his *The New Republic;* or the case of H. G. Wells and *Men Like Gods*. My own first realization of responsibility tween me and the object. Also it became increasingly clear that the brighter side of those darker characters was exactly the side seen by their relatives and friends; nor could I see that anything was to be gained by the dimming of that shining aspect. Yet, mark you, I must needs use both character and unhappy incident for the purpose of my picture. And there is the point at which I violated the sanctity of truth.

I VIOLATED the sanctity of truth because I could not see duty as a sacrifice, when the sacrifice was of others. In the cosmic drama truthfulness and honor would not kiss. So I stood between two alternatives: On one hand was abandonment of the entire book, on another hand there was the continuance of the book, but with truth and possible dishonor, or at least uncomfort for others, going hand in hand. Of a sudden I found a way between the two alternatives, the way of compromise. I tuned my mind to falsification. I invented names for some of my characters. At times I threw the picture somewhat out of focus, as does my friend Field, when, improving upon nature, he makes one of his picturesque scenes. There were cases in which I softened characteristics to the end that trouble for others should not be dragged from veteran retirement. So I began to feel at ease with myself, until I remembered that what seemed like virtuous action was really a sort of moral obfuscation. Uprushes from the subconscious, to use the language of the psychologists, told me that I was no indomitable warrior of the Nietzschean sort, but a sentimentalist.

YET *what you did was fair enough*, I imagine you saying. *It was a quite excusable and very human warping, natural to the circumstances.* To that I reply that it was a dangerous warping due to sentimentality, to be excused or condoned only if I followed out the plan and gave fictitious names to all of my personages. But that I did not do. I found myself glad enough to name real names where I admired, or where I wished to compliment and please, or where acquaintanceship lifted me, or in cases where I was a hero-worshipper. What is more, had I been endowed with the gift of Harry Salpeter in making spiritual snapshots, I would have named hundreds of living men and women in no timid or spiritless way. Hence there is no doubting at all that I have been guilty of trying to run with the hare and chase with the hounds, a proceeding generally condemned but frequently practised, especially in a mean way by politicians, but which, if properly carried out, must of necessity mean an enlargement of horizon. It might mean justice plus sympathy, which is rare. It might mean comprehension of economic ills. It might mean less hardness in many matters of dispute.

However, a man cannot play fast and loose and come off unscathed. For me the trouble lay not in the compromise, but in the entry of sentimentality. It came in disturbed judgment. For sentimentality not only warps, but creates liars and hypocrites. It is the equivalent of a magnet stuck in a mariner's compass. Had I, in divorcing myself from Puritan severity, so warped myself that I must forever unconsciously warp and twist?

Let me give an example, showing how things worked and how these very proofs had to be altered. Being persuaded to broadcast in New York, I found myself with a request, at the close, to go to a telephone booth and call a number in a neighboring state. That I did. Although I had not heard the voice of the man at the other end of the phone for ten years and more, I recognized it in an instant, knew it as belonging to a man who had once walked perilous ways so that it had been my task to displace him, and to threaten all manner of evil against him did he not stay displaced. But all of that was in the past. He had walked other paths, had become respectable and respected, and successful. So we talked pleasantly and the tragedy of yesterday became the comedy of the present. So there was warping sentimentality again, and I combed these proofs with care to be certain that no trail should lead to his door. Another case comes to mind, one that happened a few days later. Autographing books for a bookseller, I became conscious of a man standing near. Looking up, I had a kind of ghost memory which did not take solid shape until he asked me whether I remembered him. At the sound of his voice, name and face clicked together, though I had not seen him for more than twenty years.

"Yes," said I, "it is Burke."

"Burke then, but Hare now," he answered, and nodded secret complicity. Then it came out that he held a position of trust in a corporation of reputed stability, so another trail had to be blurred when these galley sheets came to me, else all that he had built might well become as a heap of sliding sand.

Observe, I am as ready as anyone to say that truthfulness is the essential thing, and to quote

> Thou thinkest to serve God with lies,
> Thou devil-worshipper and fool!

but I quote with mental reservations. Trying to draw the line between truth and lies I find myself confused because of the intermingling of things. I seem to discover lies told because the teller has caught the whispering of heavenly voices, so to speak. For if God is on the side of fair play for striving man, and if on the other side are all those massed prejudices and oppositions and jealousies and revengefulnesses and hatreds that we call human nature, it would be a miserable fellow who would hesitate in telling a disinterested thumping lie in steady unflinching manner to checkmate the complex organization of society bent upon intriguing against that striving man. Nor is argument needed to prove that there is a heartless and unkind parading of the past of any man who dares to set himself to perilous climbing. I cite the case of Warren G. Harding which comes to mind.

I might cite many cases. In fact the whole trend of the day, as evidenced by many biographical works, is to offset gush and panegyric, itself a kind of lying, with a very particular revelation of youthful indiscretions. For such revelation too is lying, because it has a tendency to give a wrong impression as to the general course of a man's life. Put the matter this way: Suppose a sailing ship's course to lie a certain direction, but suppose that ship encountered head winds. There would have to be tackings, and many of them, with a course the more irregular according to the severity and contrariness of wind and current. But the thing that really counts is that the ship made port, went indeed from east to west against opposing forces. What, then, would any seaman think of some smart-aleck with no knowledge of seamanship and only a superficial knowledge of various things who should get hold of the sailing chart and pronounce judgments rashly because the chart markings showed that the course went sometimes northward, sometimes southward, sometimes indeed headed back east? The application is obvious. You may on occasion tell the truth and shame the devil, but it is also possible to tell the truth and give the devil fresh hold, enabling him to go and on on in sustained joyfulness. Our modern society indeed is built on lies, cemented with lies, composed of lies. The press lies. Legislative halls listen to lies and those half-lies which are platitudes. The pulpit thunders lies at the behest of mammon. Professional educators lie from ignorance as well as because of self-interest. Mothers lie to their children and husbands charitably lie to their wives. As for children somewhat grown, the more conscience they have, the more fervently they lie. The explanation is simple. Human beings are notoriously cowards when it comes to public opinion, and truthfulness is the highest form of courage. All men are liars because all men lack valor.

THINK, also, of the violation of truth that must come in all works of art, and suppose for the sake of argument that this book of mine nears a certain artistry. There are self-restraint and modesty, for example. Once or twice in my life, because of impulse and lack of imagination, I did deeds that some said were courageous. But, if true courage is the subordination of self to resolution, then I say I was not courageous at all because I did not subordinate self. I looked for a measure of applause. A certain deed meant swimming out to a schooner that had gone ashore, with a line about my waist. Another time, in my early youth, I dived from a great height into shallow water. Both deeds were done for the love of applause. In the second case my desire for approbation actually overcame a fear of death, for I remember thinking, as I stood poised, that I might not come out of the silly test alive, yet I dived. So what had the appearance of bravery I know to have been folly, even cowardice. With such experiences in mind, anyone may see that in the writing of a book about one's own experiences there must needs be a self-restraint that might shade off into falsification, nothing serious, but yet not the bare and exact truth that a man of high spiritual endowment should expect of himself.

Add to those inhibitions a necessity for compression, for compression had to be if dull documentation was to be avoided, and anyone may see how there must needs come about a tempering, much as a piano-tuner tempers his scale so that each sharp and flat, each natural, too, must be somewhat in the nature of a lie, all for the sake of harmony. Thus my book makes it appear that only once I went to Antwerp, and only once to the Canary Islands, whereas I went to the former place four times, to the latter three, but all the striking events of the seven visits are in this book compressed into the space of three weeks. Compression, too, accounts for other omissions, because compression becomes a habit, and in reviewing past years, partly because of the unutterable rapidity of human life and partly because the mind learns to seize upon salient things, there is rejection of that which has no special bearing upon acts. So it was not until I came to making the index that I remembered having seen George Gissing in the Marylebone Road, and, on a later occasion, having a word or two with him. Then there is Shaw. Somerfield and I once walked and talked with him, and with exercise of a little imagination I might have made the conversation one of extraordinary richness. Also I have left out the incident of how we bought seats for a Methodist church; how a good man of religion came in the glow of gladness asking me to conduct an ice-cream festival he contemplated, the purpose of it being to reduce the deficit on a purchase of seats; how he went to Chicago on some urgent call; how we concluded that more people had a deep and abiding yearning for a good boxing match than for ice cream; how we turned the basement of the church into a pugilistic arena; how we advertised four sets of three fast rounds, heavy weight, medium weight, light and bantam weight; how we not only cleared off the debt but had surplus enough for a beer party; how the man of religion was pleased that he had breasted the gales of fortune but deplored the manner of the breasting. Then there is the affair of the so-called night riders during the Ohio tobacco war, during which a young fellow, now a portly magnate of the automobile industry with a splendid home on Long Island, rode with me every morning, for we were breaking horses; how we played night rider and so struck terror into the hearts of the imported national guardsmen. Also I should have told of my recent visit to England, and how I met once more Cunninghame Graham and Ernest Rhys and seven old friends and many notables.

So YOU begin to see how it is. What with innocent unconsciousness and a sense of relative values, what with my reprehensible kindness, what with my own errancy, what with an imagination of a certain richness, what with ethical influences, what with a seeing of things that is sometimes clear and sometimes foggy, and what with the occasional play of prejudices by which equipoise is lost, that which starts out as a true record, plain and simple, becomes something as elaborately complex as a morning glory when a brace of professors, botanical and chemical, begin to analyze it.

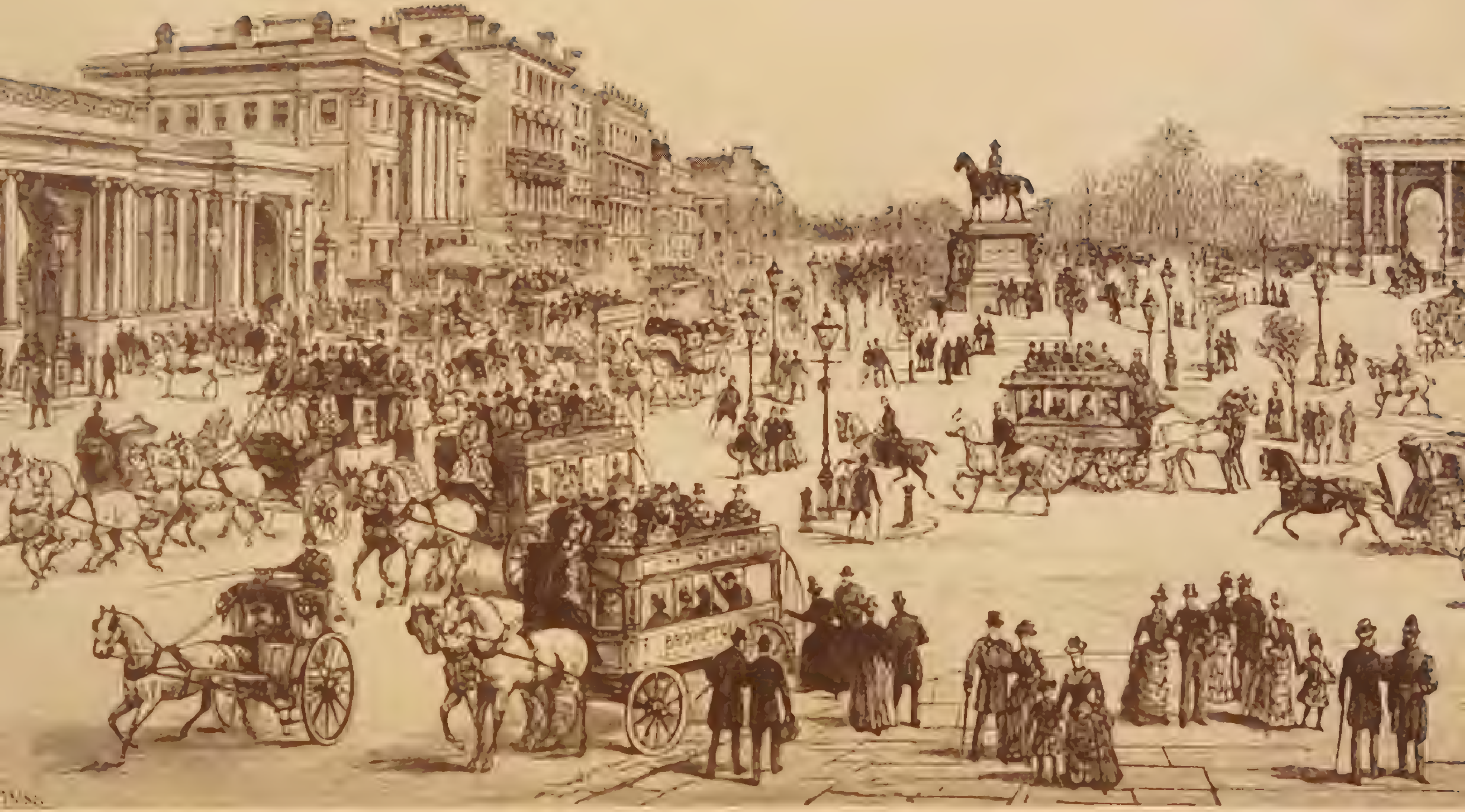
If I had my way I would use this letter as a sub-title, though there would be flashings of lurid lightnings, I fear, if you took me at my word and suggested it to the setter-up of the book. But, since it has been written impromptu and for no human eye other than yours, why not seize upon truth and print the whole thing as an introduction or a preface? The more I think of that the better I like the idea. Also it will be of value to those gentlemen of intelligence and industry, the book reviewers. Being a fellow in the craft, I know how my courage, my strength, and my gladness increase when I find a book with an author's explanation, especially when some literary editor, having taken a quick and comprehensive view of the book, indicates its significance with a pencilled "800 words," on the upper left-hand corner of the jacket.

Here then ends my first letter of this new year, and I trust you have had the patience and forbearance to read it. May the gods give you large ideas and generous aims. May they endow you with a deep and tender solicitude for all well-meaning authors. May you, in many a manuscript, find wisdom and truth imperceptible to the careless eye. May the gods preserve you from complications and intricacies, and be benign to you, and make your life more joyful, and enrich you with that friendship which is the finest and most significant thing in life.

Sincerely yours

Charles J. Finger

H. E. MAULE, ESQ.,
Doubleday, Doran & Co.,
Garden City, N. Y.



MID-VICTORIAN LONDON

BOOK I

Respectability

CHAPTER I

Mayfair and Its Gods

I

IMAGINE a boy of Mayfair with the words Mayfair and Respectability synonymous. He must be a kind of Fauntleroy child at the beginning, golden-haired, dressed in gilt-buttoned suit of dark-blue velvet, with a large-brimmed and broad-ribboned straw hat, silver-buckled shining shoes making a pleasant finish to the whole. You must picture him as one into whom has been pumped strange notions of what should be supposed to constitute "middle classes," and "the lower orders," and "polite behavior," especially Respectability, with a large capital R. But the picture you make must not be static. It should take in a period of time stretching over twelve years or so, because this story cannot be cluttered up with dates. Take the space of time, in a general way as, between those days when Disraeli slowly paced Curzon Street, a chalk-faced and bent old gentleman of large and gracious manner, and those days more than a decade later when the last of the knights, Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham, charged the solid phalanx of London police who were supported by Life Guards and by Grenadier Guards with fixed bayonets—charged while calling on liberty lovers who roared more fiercely than they fought and deserted their leader when he fell, without striking a blow. By that time the Mayfair boy in Cavalier dress must have changed into a youth wearing high collars and starched cuffs on great occasions, but on ordinary occasions a brigandish slouch hat, and a Jaeger shirt of wool, and tie of a hue signifying revolutionary leanings. You must imagine him lamenting the decline of the democratic state and denouncing the tyranny of governments.

As to Mayfair and the boy's early environment, you must see a mid-Victorian home so as to get an idea of double-curtained windows and brass rings of a kind given by explorers to savages, with an arrangement of brass rods and tasseled velvet ropes, and long red sausagelike pads laid along all window cracks to keep out drafts, and window shades that were worked up and down by means of green cords on rollers, and window-seats covered with mats of needlework showing flowers worked in a laboriously minute way; floors covered with very thick carpets, and stairs also carpet-covered, with brass rods at the inner angles. For in those days to have uncarpeted spaces in a house would be almost like disobeying the principles of the universe. You must imagine a sort of stateroom with chairs of silk and gilt which were enveloped in white covers when there was no expectation of company. And the fireplace should not be overlooked because it was a magnificent composition of marble mantel, and brass fender, and hand-worked fire screen, and magnificent gilt-framed mirror, and gold clock designed by an artist of fecund fancy, and glass-covered basket of waxen fruits made by someone of unrestrained temperament, and hearthrug of delicate lilac color with a gout-stool in the exact center of it. No one of the family suffered from gout, but so many friends of the family, males, declared that they felt themselves threatened with a touch of it that I came to believe gout a concomitant of age, like gray hair or failing eyesight.

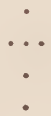
Add to the furnishing of the room a very tall piano with a red silk panel curiously pleated to make a radiating design from a silk rose center, and let the piano have brass candle-brackets, and knobs to its lid, and carven designs about the legs of it, and a somewhat massive top. See also a tall bookcase with glass doors; a four-globed gas arrangement suspended from the ceiling, the work of some wide-minded creator who believed in the decorative effect of spirited spirals and whirls and brass lilies; a round mahogany table covered with a velvet cloth enriched with fringe that depended from looped cords of intricate weave; and on the table a few books set out in mathematical arrangement, one of them a Doré Bible, another a photograph album, both with brass clasps to imprison their contents. On the walls there were a few pictures, steel engravings hung tilted forward for easy inspection. The mental suggestion of the room must be Uncomfortable Rules of Life. Its atmosphere excluded pleasure. It was a place in which one acted anxiously.

But in the house there were chambers of less restriction. A pleasant place lay elsewhere, by way of the hall, past the hat-rack and umbrella stand, past the barometer which everyone tapped, through the baize hangings which separated front hall from back hall, down a back hall which was covered with oil-cloth, and down stairs which were not covered, and so into the kitchen where great and mysterious things were always afoot, and where you could look up through the windows to see the legs of passing people, and where the cook appeared to me as a woman who affected the happiness of the household because my mother treated her in a way that later struck me as almost deferential, especially when there were "engagements upstairs," as my mother termed them. Those engagements involved dinners as heavy as any recorded by Samuel Pepys—soups, fish, boiled mutton and caper sauce, many vegetables; roast duck for those who did not like mutton or who chose to supplement it; puddings, cake, wine, whiskey and beer—a serious business of two hours. Often, at the end of such a feast, I retired upstairs, pale and ill at ease. Often, in my case, there were severed ties, so to speak, after which I slept till tea time, then reappeared to mingle briskly with the company, and to master without enjoying what should be set before me—tea, currant and seed cake, bread and butter, muffins and crumpets saturated with butter, sweets. I was what the cook called "a 'arty-eater." If, in languor of spirit, I sought the company of Bill, who cleaned shoes and knives in the scullery, and I did admire and respect Bill who was always light-hearted and amusing, he, in his frank outspokenness, would declare that "You people upstairs stuff like pigs. That's what." He, unassumingly, would take up the rôle of prophet, saying that my experience could not leave me unscathed. "You'll want some of that bloody grub one of these days," he whispered warningly, at which I would wonder, not seeing a way to lay the food aside for future consumption.

Mayfair and Respectability, I have said, should be considered as synonymous. Becky Sharp, you may recall, lived in Curzon Street at the time of her affair with Lord Steyne. Lord Beaconsfield thought well enough of the neighborhood to live in the same street, not very far from Chesterfield House. And once Shelley lodged in Half Moon Street, I think about the time he wrote to old Sir Bysshe, offering him "the choice of sending Money as a Duty," or "in the daringness of Despair being denounced as a Bigot and a Tyrant." It was not the Shelley on fire with an idea who thought to set a crooked world straight by thrusting pamphlets on "The Necessity for Atheism" in the hoods of gentle old ladies, but a Shelley keeping a respectable front in spite of narrow resources. Therefore domestics belonging to the house were sent down a certain covered way that led out of Curzon Street and into a market-place beyond, which covered way bore the name of Sun Court. That passage and market-place were known also to Becky Sharp, for there dwelt unsuspicious merchants who were abject; or, being suspicious, who could be browbeaten and threatened and scolded at sign of feebleness or vacillation when fronted for an order for table necessities while an account past due remained disregarded. Dignity often is built on foundations of fear.

But in those days I knew nothing of Shelley, nor of Becky Sharp, nor of any other character concerned with literature. Although we possessed a considerable library of expensively bound and lavishly illustrated books, mostly historical and purchased in monthly parts to be put aside for binding, therefore could not be read until bound, and which when bound turned out to be too precious for frequent handling, yet literature took on no special significance for any of the family. Sometimes my mother stumbled on something that has stood the test of time, as when she stumbled on Mark Twain's *Jumping Frog*, but, for the most part, that which my parents read was ephemeral stuff, the sentimental largely favored. I see my mother now, a gentle little figure of a woman dressed in black silk and lace collar, brown-eyed and raven-haired, weeping copiously over a book with cover of green and gold, gold-edged too, the writer of it being Grace Aguilar, its title *Home*

Influence. It was a sort of luxury of grief in which she indulged. She sat spellbound over another book, a volume I have never been able to identify, which was entitled *The Book with the Iron Clasp.* She recommended it highly to all visitors, as well as to the cook who read assiduously, but slowly, a weekly called *The Family Herald.* And both my parents read, shuddered over and compared notes about and discussed seriously with relatives translations of Eugene Sue's *Mysteries of Paris*, and *The Wandering Jew*, though they warned me against both books as being unfit for young minds when I opened one of the volumes in idle curiosity, hitting upon a page and passage telling about the tracks left by the wanderer's boots which had nails in this shape:



and that seemed mysterious enough to require elucidation. What tragic and awful circumstances could be bound up with the sign was an enigma that occupied me for many a day.

A writer named Arthur Sketchley, who wrote a series of books about a fictitious character named Mrs. Brown, always sent both my parents into gales of merriment. Everything he wrote they eagerly sought after. Lover's *Handy Andy* also held a fund of laughter for them. Theodore Hook also appealed to them as a humorist, in a novel called *Jack Brag.* Once, hunting in an upstairs room where such books were kept, I came across a stumpy, fat book entitled *Aristotle*, doubtless some spurious thing of the day, and found in it much to interest and to amuse me, to stir me to laughter too, because of strange pictures of monsters half-human and half-animal. My mother discovered me deep in the volume and snatched it away with surprising swiftness, warning me against reading any books without consulting her. Thereafter I made close search for it without success.

The strange thing is that of books written by men of the time, whose positions have since steadily grown stronger, no word was said in our home. I am positive that our circle remained unaware of them. All went unregarded from, let me say, Browning's *Ring and the Book*, or William Morris's *Earthly Paradise*, or Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*, up and through the times of the advent of such glorious figures as Eliot, Dickens, Meredith, Thackeray, Hardy with his *Far from the Madding Crowd*, Carlyle, Stevenson, Ruskin, Swinburne, Tennyson—not in our family alone, but in those circles in which we moved. But I remember tearful things such as Miss Warner's *Wide Wide World;* Mrs. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin;* informative things published by the Society for Diffusing Useful Knowledge; religious literature such as Ingraham's *Prince of the House of David;* and dozens and dozens of hard and shiny-covered churchly books which were brought into the house by my aunts. Those, together with many tracts and periodicals, and stories that commenced promisingly but all too soon wandered into a bristling thicket of Rev. VII, 4, 5, and Hos. 11, 23, and similar uncomfortable references, were promptly dispatched kitchenward, to be received by Bill with poorly repressed merriment. Nor did I wonder at Bill's attitude, for the literature he favored struck me as being highly desirable. He read great spreading sheets which were crowded with pictures of masked men, and coffins, and murders, and crouching women, and sometimes a scaffold with a man about to be hanged. Compared with all that our upstairs literature seemed faded and dreary, with very little prospect about it. It could not come near the extraordinary richness of Bill's universe. So through Bill and his literature I became *au courant* with a life that thundered somewhere in a world touching that in which I lived, but not easily to be discovered by me.

So as one may read of strange customs in far lands, I learned of the exploits of contemporary murderers, the daily business of police courts and policemen and prisons, thrilling shipwrecks and railroad accidents, accepting all without horror as a part of the oddity of life. If I wondered at all, the wonderment ended in a conclusion to the effect that my parents and their friends were strangely unadventurous, intellectually. At the mere word murder, when the newsboys called in the street, which they did on rare occasions, street-bawling not being permitted in Curzon Street, my parents would be shocked. But Bill, in the scullery, considered that to be shocked at crime was a mark of vanity. "It don't lower any self-respec' in me to hear that someone killed someone," said Bill. "But it'd make me blush like the devil to enjoy what some of 'em upstairs enjoy talkin' about."

In retrospect, it comes to me that Bill did slip past certain things with delicate tact, things discussed upstairs.

The memory of some of those upstairs talks confirms me in the belief that had literature at all worthy of the name entered into the educational processes of the family I would have noticed the fact. Certainly I noted, and still remember, the common songs of the day which I heard sung in snatches in the streets by butcher lads and baker lads and milkmen. I also remember the songs sung in the drawing rooms by my cousins, girls much my senior, "Cherry Ripe," "The Wishing Cap," "The Angel's Whisper," and a dozen more, most of which were voiced with tragic solemnity. As to the subjects of conversation, things stand out boldly in my memory. In spite of all the fortifications erected about me, in spite of vague and bewildering references and reticences that I came to mark with suspicion, strange information filtered into my consciousness by a sort of endosmosis. For instance, there were frequent references to something darkly mysterious in connection with the Prince of Wales and a Lady Mourdant. It was a sort of hang-over just as the Oscar Wilde case is a hang-over to-day, a something almost like a remembered dramatic entertainment necessitating so many expensive essentials that it could have been given only once. So I sought elucidation in the scullery, but Bill said: "I wouldn't bother my 'ead about that dirty stuff. It's just 'igh-toned smut. That's what it is. 'Igh-life smut." He handed me a copy of an illustrated pirate story, and my bashfulness prevented further inquiries of similar nature. There were other mysteries for which I sought solution; about Annie Besant, for one thing, who had written a book called *Fruits of Philosophy*. "Carried out, it would destroy marriage," my mother had observed, when the matter had been discussed in my hearing.

When it became known that I was curious as to how marriage would be destroyed, I was sent to bed. Also at different times there had been talk about a Colonel Valentine Baker who had assaulted a Miss Dickerson in a railway carriage, which, I supposed, meant that he had insulted her by failing to raise his hat when entering the compartment, though why he should be fined and imprisoned for that caused me much concern. My conscience smote me as equally guilty of assault. Those and similar subjects were discussed in my presence upstairs, in what was intended to be guarded language, my elders believing that it meant no more to me than my talk about music may mean to my Airedale. But the minds of children, at a time before the habit of independent verification is destroyed by systematic subjection to authority, are like sensitive photographic plates. The seniors are the intellectual laggards because of long subjection to authority from school age upward, with bias and prejudice murking their lights, destroying their sense of mental adventure, leaving them limited and incomplete. Thought is not bound in the young, as it is in the old. I, sitting in apparent disinterestedness and turning over the leaves of *The World of Wonders* while listening to the conversation of my elders, knew that a virtuous and fiery indignation would result did I give the least hint that an active brain heard and stored away. It would never do to flutter the dovecots of propriety.

Once I became annoyed beyond endurance, tactlessly giving myself away because what seemed a most promising discussion got nipped in the bud when the Reverend Mr. Bott put in an appearance unexpectedly. The occasion was an afternoon tea on a gray day in November, so gloomy that the gas had to be lit before the usual time. I sat in the window seat sideways, to get both lights on my book, which was called *The Basket of Flowers*, about a country girl accused of theft of jewelry and imprisoned on suspicion, while the real culprit, a jackdaw, went free. And tea-time attained the rank of a ritual in our home, what with the silver urn at which my mother sat in state, the bread and butter of respectable thinness, the rose-bud tea service, and a kind of antiphonal chant in which the ladies pressed one another to eat but made answer that they had no appetites and were naturally delicate eaters. It is all so clear-cut in my memory that I recall wondering at the meaning of two lines at the head of a chapter:

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage.

Which seemed absurd. But at a word from my Aunt Alice I rose to the surface like a man swimming up from deep waters, my mind going back to what had been said and catching it as one catches the past number of strokes on a clock in the middle of striking. It was, "Have you heard the latest about the prince?"

"Another!" exclaimed my mother.

"Lily?" asked Aunt Conolly, brightening up.

"Mind you, I only give the tale as I heard it," began Aunt Alice, whereupon the three drew together for confidences, with a certain zest. At that moment the maid announced the presence of the Reverend Mr. Bott.

There were fluttering politenesses, the overcoming of difficulties because of Mr. Bott's bashfulness, a little fussing about chairs, a little constraint until dignity broadened into sociability. When they had accepted circumstances they talked of the weather, of the church, of the choir, of the monstrous errors of the High Church party; then Mr. Bott told of how he had met this one and that at dinners, naming great names. In after years I came to look upon him as more of a deipnosophist than a cure of souls. He certainly testified abundantly to his own popularity as a guest. Once, to my thinking, the conversation seemed to be voyaging prosperously, when Mr. Bott, holding his teacup delicately, his little finger extended far from the others as if it were consecrated to a life of ease, said, in mournful way, something about "the deplorable morals of the age," an expression familiar enough in those days, as well as in these.

"As you came in," observed my mother, "we were about to talk of those catchy songs which the lower orders——"

Then, full of a deep hopefulness and with unfastidious frankness, I launched a destructive torpedo with, "No, Mama. It was that scandal about a prince and a lily. Let's go on with that." At which my Aunt Alice, with considerable authority, told me that it was time for me to go upstairs, thus acting in vice-regal way for my mother who, while blushing furiously, had discovered something needing close attention in the tea-urn. Mr. Bott seemed not to have heard my remark, but I could not make certain because of the urgency of my aunt.

"Hm! The influence of Shepherd's Market——" I heard the clergyman begin, in his plangent tenor, then the door closed and I knew only the silence of the carpeted hall. I accepted my expulsion with resignation, but said to the Persian cat, "They are liars. It's what they were talking about all the same." When the cat blinked, and rocked to settle down on its paws more luxuriously, I felt comforted at having one living creature that understood and in whose presence I might honestly think aloud.

2

That Shepherd's Market of which Mr. Bott spoke, referring to it as a place of moral malaria from which emanated a withering atmosphere, stands for me as a sort of symbol, signifying time and place where I first mingled freely and generously with life.

According to plans laid by my mother, Mary Penny, the maid, would take me for a walk up Curzon Street, "keeping to the left-hand-side pavement to be out of danger from carriage horses," then going as far as Chesterfield House and so back, "without any loitering, and without any talking to grooms or soldiers." That warning was frequently given and I always privately resented the prohibition and preserved silence at infractions, which were frequent. For Mary always seemed to me to be pretty in her black and white, neatly capped and aproned; and to see a groom or a soldier sauntering by her side delighted me. Privately I used to play at being a prince guarded by chivalrous knights. But what annoyed my young soul more than the prohibitions were the final inspections by my mother and Mary, often with an aunt or two in the offing. I was twisted and turned, shamelessly buttoned and arranged, patted and poked and pulled, asked questions of an intimate nature, and all the while a flood of instructions born of over-caution poured forth.

"Always keep to respectable streets, Mary," my mother would warn. "One can never be too careful. . . . Dr. Brookes said, only the other day, that there is a great deal of whooping cough about. Measles too. You never know what might come from Shepherd's Market. Scarlatina too. It ought to be pulled down and made into a park or something. I never pass Sun Court without thinking of how it would be easy to catch something or other. And remember, Mary, what I say about talking to grooms and soldiers. One hears dreadful things. . . . A good nursemaid is worth her weight in gold."

Hearing that, I always had a vision of Mary sitting in one scoop of a huge scale while my father piled sovereigns in the other. It would be an exciting moment, I thought, when the weighing depended upon a single coin for the final adjustment. The burning question as to whether Mary would be weighed with or without clothes also occupied me. In the former case the result would be unfair to my father. In the latter case it was abundantly clear that I would never be allowed to witness the transaction.

We started along Curzon Street then, but when opposite Sun Court, Mary stopped. Across the road, waving and beckoning, was Jim the milkman with his milk cart.

"I think he wants to tell me something about the milk," said Mary. "Stay where you are like a good boy and don't move. I'll be back before you say Jack Robinson. . . . No. . . . You can't come because of your new shoes. There's mud in the road, and horse dung."

I knew the excuse to be a subterfuge, the easier because Bill the knife-boy had told me more than once that Mary and Jim were "making up" and that it would surprise no one if she became a milkwoman. But it seemed right and proper that Mary should go out of her way to talk with Jim because there was an air of jollity about him what with his laughing face, and his white smock, and his leggings, and his shiny hat. And there was an irresistible fascination about his milk barrow with its bright painted wheels, the brass rail on which milk containers of brass and pewter were hung, and the little picture in red and blue and green and yellow showing a shepherd telling his tale to a shepherdess in the presence of three sheep listening with intelligent interest and understanding. Also I felt very happy to be alone at the mouth of that covered way, a place of mystery.

Of course I stepped into Sun Court, not being immured among conventions and received opinions; only a pace or two to feel that I had been there, and to be able to tell Bill the knife-boy, much as people go across the bridge to Jaurez to say that they have been in Mexico. But with some of us, as with Dante's Ulysses, nothing can quench that "inward burning to have full witness of the world," and having set foot in the unknown land my soul yearned after new things.

Looking down the covered way the color of the place seemed as amazing as a scene in a theater. What could be more enchanting than blazing gas jets in a street in daytime, turning everything to gold and shade? There came to me new noises and laughter; strange smells wafted to me; and at the end of the covered way stood a vision of a wide and sunlit place with a steel-blue look about it. And clouds of tobacco smoke drifted out and into Curzon Street, slow whirling clouds, now blue, now gray. There were shops the existence of which I had never suspected. It all seemed as engrossing and beautiful as the transformation scene in a Christmas play, an avenue of wonder, a paradise of activity. As in a dream I walked and saw, exultant, butcher and baker shops; open stalls on which fruits were displayed; a fish-monger's window in which a black lobster with faintly moving feelers sprawled on a block of ice; a news vendor sitting at a little table from which hung a picture of a man striking a woman with an ax; a bird seller with canaries and larks and thrushes in white wood cages. Transported I went on and on, happy because of the voices that rang in my ears, because of strange smells, because for the first time in my life I saw a man who lurched and sang as he walked so I knew him to be drunk, for thus Bill had acted many a time in play. And everywhere were children, bare-headed, barefooted, barelegged; children playing all sorts of games that looked interesting, even games with oyster shells and bones; and other games that had to do with hopping across a chalk line made on the pavement. Most wonderful, there stood a boy about my own age actually eating in the public street, eating a piece of jam pudding with unmitigated jam on his cheeks so that he fascinated me, as looking like one whose mouth stretched from ear to ear. The sight made me realize that a smell of frying fish hung about the place, and that made me think of dinner time, and of home, so a dark cloud of doubt as to the wisdom of further exploration filled me. But there was that great hunger, the hunger to know something of the temper and texture of the world, so I passed the outer portals of Sun Court and stepped into the wide-open, sunlit space of Shepherd's Market.

It was like entering the gates of a new world, and that a world of energy and activity. It was life flashing full and free. It was like gazing on far horizons and beautiful prospects. The multiplication of sensations affected me as much as I am to-day affected when I hear that choral massiveness of the Ninth Symphony. The complex charm and joy of wholesome and invigorating life burst upon me much as we may suppose a first sight of the living world bursts upon a blind man to whom sight is suddenly given.

Where I stood the roadway bent horseshoe fashion forming a cul-de-sac for vehicles; so, to my imagination, I was like a spectator at a circus. And what a performance was afoot! What a troupe with big draymen, cabmen, boys playing, men in shirt sleeves, a brilliant four-in-hand being slowly driven from some mews out to Piccadilly. In the roadway, among the horses and carts and people, two boys strode on stilts, the first I had seen. To the right a Punch and Judy show held its audience. An organ grinder up a court to the left played nasal music. For scenic effects there were houses and shops, houses and shops, and again houses and shops; and everywhere hung striped awnings with the names of people painted on them in big black letters. Out of upper windows men and women looked down and talked to people on the pavement, both straining their voices to be mutually audible. Noises louder than any I had ever imagined rang delightfully on my ears, rumbling sounds, the lively and robust cries of hawkers, a low and melodious thunder caused by heavy drays rolling over cobbled road. A soldier in scarlet tunic talking to a woman in blue made a warm spot of color. Seeing that I became aware of a brilliancy of hue, a brewerman's red cap, window curtains of green and yellow and red, a signboard all gilt and emerald. For the first time I realized that Curzon Street was gray and dull and drab. So I felt the urge to go further on because of the abundant enjoyment of it all, and probably would have done so had not my attention been held by the sight of the organ grinder who had seated himself against the wall in the alley, or court, and had taken out a sausage and piece of bread to feed his monkey. It was a comical little figure in red cloak and feathered hat, with a sadly seamed face, as if it knew problems and worries untold or had wrinkled because of the dry wind of experience.

Look I must, so I stepped into the court and immediately a ragged and legless beggar flattered me immensely by addressing me as "Young Master!" as he held out a tin cup and made a plea. Up to that moment I had supposed charitable acts to be the privilege of age. My mind was flooded with pity mingled with something very much like disgust, and I wanted to give him my sixpenny piece, grasped it indeed in my pocket, but timidity and shame held me, to say nothing of my fear of public ribaldry. Then there was the monkey and the organ grinder. Was it fair to discriminate against them? Besides, the act of giving seemed to hold presumption in it, almost affectation. Yet if I did not give, might not I become similarly afflicted some day, dependent upon charity? Far above my world sat a God with a trick of making punishment fit the crime, such as bringing hunger upon him who wasted bread. I recalled a poem that told how a boy who enjoyed fishing suffered retributive empalement upon a butcher's hook. Bill's dismal prediction as to what would happen to those who "stuffed like pigs" also came to mind. So I dropped the coin into the cup and immediately experienced a joyful onrush of emotion because by my act possible catastrophe had been averted, if, indeed, I had not taken several steps toward glowing and shining realms. My life's pilgrimage, you must understand, had much to do with good and bad marks set opposite my name in a huge register, with much more vigilance exercised in the recording of the bad than the good.

At night I received warnings when I failed to hang up my clothes, though nothing in the way of praise was meted out on the many occasions on which I did hang them up.

My joyful onrush of emotion came to a swift standstill. Hardly had I turned from the beggar, blushing furiously, than I found myself confronted by a stout and burly boy, hatless and carelessly clad, with a heavy smear of soot across his face. He pointed at my hat, then at my shoes. He nodded and frowned threateningly. When I turned to go he stepped in front of me to block my way. He even circumvented a side movement by stepping on my toe, and made motions with his clenched fists in a disturbing manner. The thought flashed across my mind that this must be one of the lower classes of which I had heard so much at home; or he might be a murderer! His out-thrust lip and corrugated brow filled me with fear.

A woman in rusty black carrying a market basket halted a moment and surveyed us. "Boys didn't ought to fight," she said, not exactly addressing either of us, but rather laying down a general proposition in a nervously sincere manner, whereupon the boy said, scornfully, "Garn! Boil yer 'ead!" Thus rebuffed, she addressed me in particular, scolding, "It's you ought to be ashamed. 'E don't know better. You dressed all nice like that and fightin'. You ought to be ashamed. Go 'ome!"

She sniffed and passed on.

Then my challenger began a catechism, prefaced with "Showin' off with money, eh?" He wanted to know my name, where I lived, why I was in a hurry, what I did down there, whether I had any more money to give away. He expressed his disapproval of my face, my hair, my clothes; but especially of my hair. "Long 'air like a gal's. Why don't you get it cut, eh?" he asked again and again, twisting it. Then he invited me to strike him. "Wouldn't you like to try it? . . . Try it. . . . Jest try it. . . . 'Ere. On the bleedin' jaw. Gimme a oner on the bleedin' jaw. . . . Ugh! You're afraid." That was followed by boisterous mirth, the while he backed me against the wall. Next, his mood became class-conscious. "You don't belong 'ere. . . . Comin' 'ere with them clothes. What d'yer mean by it? Showin' off. Why don't yer stay where yer belong? 'At's what I want to know. What d'yer take yerself fer, anyhow, Eh! Speak up!"

When I answered, "Nothing, sir," by way of mollification and turning away wrath with a gentle word, he snatched at my hat and held it high, daring me to take it. But it had been instilled in me that fighting was wrong, so I debated immensely. Suddenly I became a creature new to myself, furiously raging and full of black anger as I struggled to get my hat. I struck him with my open hand and my fingers tingled with the pain, whereupon his eyes blazed and he flung my hat far; I did not see where. Clutching me by the collar he thrust his face close to mine and bumped my head against the wall. It was not at all the pain, but what he said, that frightened me; something that horrified the more because he said it between tight-clenched teeth. It burnt into me, sickened me, left me dumb and spiritless and filled me with anxiety. The whole place took on a strange quality of cruelty and coarseness. Taking what he said very literally I tore myself away, ripping open my collar by the effort, then fled up Sun Court, dodging and bumping into people, so arrived in Curzon Street breathless and fearful and wide-eyed and sobbing. And there was the comfortable sight of Mary, yet not so comfortable when I saw that she was in tearful talk with a tall policeman.

"Thank God!" she exclaimed, on seeing me. But gratitude passed swiftly into sharp resentment. "I'm ashamed of you," she cried, and became accusatory, saying that I was headstrong, that I could not be trusted for a moment, that she was always disturbed by doubt when she turned her back on me. that I would break my mother's heart. The policeman observed from loftier heights that "Boys will be boys." By that time two footmen in livery had joined the group, also a passing butcher boy with his tray, and next one of those smiling old gentlemen of benevolent appearance who always seem to be on hand at such moments. So I felt very small, and very prominent, very much obsessed too with the memory of that strange and fearful thing said by the boy, though I kept it silently hidden in my heart lest the policeman should further complicate matters by producing the boy. Then another boy appeared, the boy with the jam-smeared face, who bore my hat much crushed as if a wheel had passed over it. The light of happiness and well-doing gleamed in his eye. Doubtless he looked for reward for services rendered, but if so his Fate proved perverse because the policeman took the hat, frowned, shook a warning head, then bade the boy take himself off. It all ended when one of the footmen addressed Mary, patting her shoulder as he advised her to get home. So she led me away.

As we walked she told me again and again that the knowledge of what had passed would break my mother's heart, until, at last, I began to regard silence about the adventure as extremely desirable, and said so, whereupon she promised me gifts of cake, then deftly removed traces of the adventure from me. Being arrived home we entered by the area way, which was unusual; then I was hurried upstairs, washed and redressed, and was very obviously guarded until the time came for presentation to my mother. Mary, I noticed, became very voluble, praising the pigeons in the courtyard at Chesterfield House, and inventing a flower-bed which she said I had admired. She ended by saying that a walk with me always stood in her memory as a delightful experience. All the while, at the back of my mind, the thing said by the boy whirled and weaved bewilderingly, so much so that I felt myself tempted to repeat it and so rid my memory of it. I might have done so, had not my mother turned to me to ask if I had enjoyed the outing, at which my conscience or else the dawning sense of diplomacy forbade me to do more than nod my head in answer.

"Say 'Yes'," said my mother. "No well-bred boy nods to mean yes."

So I said "Yes," and wondered privately what God would do about that in the way of good and bad marks; for, if I told a lie, it was in obedience. The matter coming up for discussion on Judgment Day would offer excellent opportunity for argument. I resolved to remember the incident.

That night I lay long awake staring into the dark and seeing surly, forbidding faces that mouthed at me and threatened. I wondered too why I had been so treated after an act of charity; wondered why all that vivid life had been so long unknown to me, wondered at the injustice of things because the boy who brought my lost hat had been threatened and chidden. All the while, like a variation of a musical theme, now pianissimo and now loud and startling chords, the words of the fearful threat repeated themselves.

Between sleeping and waking I heard my mother enter the room, as she often did, to see if I was comfortable and to bid me good-night. I greeted her with, "Mama, I said my 'Now I lay me down to sleep,'" and she bent over and kissed me. I heard the rustle of her dress as she went, heard the soft click of the door lock as it turned, then wrenched myself into a sitting position and into full wakefulness to bid her good-night again. But that was not all. Though filled with love and loyalty there remained something that I had to say, that I was bound to say though I had to fight through a cloud of shame and fear to say it. It was that new and terrible thing said by the boy to which I still vibrated with a thrill of awe. So I called out: "Mama! Listen. I'll wring your damn bloody neck, I will! . . . Good-night."

3

Another Curzon Street walk among many stands clear and sharp-cut in my memory. It was one with my Uncle Allen on a Sunday, on which day a mighty and depressing hush fell on all Mayfair, so much so that even walking became a grave business.

Of middle height, inclined to portliness, my uncle had a certain dignity about him. As I came to realize later, he purposely suited his manner and carriage to that of one who carried responsibilities, because he somewhat resembled Lord Salisbury and prided himself on the resemblance. Very often strangers in Piccadilly and Berkeley Square saluted him under the impression that they were honoring the statesman, and my uncle always acknowledged the attention as one to the manner born. I suspect that he took infinite pains to trim his beard in the Salisbury fashion, to dress in the Salisbury way, to cultivate an appearance of the Salisbury melancholy habit of mind, to wear his hat at the Salisbury angle. My parents, I am sure, hung on the wisdom of his speech, especially when he opened his mouth and taught them politically, which he was prone to do at the dinner table at great length.

"And how would we like to take a stroll up Curzon Street?" he would ask, looking down at me, for in those days my eyes were on a level with his watch chain. Hiding my discontent I would make a noise which he could take as assent if he chose, whereupon my mother and Mary Penny would concern themselves with me. Condemned to misery and silence and polite behavior I would be thrust forth perfect as to clothes, rebellious as to mind. On the way, that there might be no contravention of the rules, my uncle would instruct and advise me, *sotto voce*, the while he looked straight ahead. And what an interminable procession of prohibitions! Time can never obliterate those cautions and lectures on conduct and etiquette. They were not the sort to tranquillize, but rather to fill me with utter hopelessness as impressing me with an idea of the vast gulf that separated me from Perfect Behavior. I seemed to be a stigma on Mayfair because of the innumerable evils of which I stood proved guilty. My uncle condemned in categorical way. I scraped my feet as I walked. I talked too loudly. I could not walk without bumping into my companion and escort. I stared into windows as I passed them. I swung my arms. I touch railings as I walked. "If we walked a little faster I could go better," I once protested, having in mind the wabbling of a hoop too slowly propelled. "Young gentlemen do not run in the streets," answered my uncle, and added: "Especially on Sunday. You must learn to check bad habits." That was the commencement of a steady, chilling shower of good advice which lasted until we reached the upper end of Curzon Street.

On the other side of the street a tall man paced slowly, his head bent, marking time with his cane. At sight of him my uncle bade me set my hat straight, and when I had obeyed he said: "Go across the road, but do not run, and ask that gentleman to tell you the time." Hearing that, I wondered, knowing that my uncle's watch always stood as final authority for us at home. Rather than argue about the time in case of disagreement between two authorities, my parents would have suspected Greenwich Observatory guilty of fanciful and erroneous conclusions, so I did as bidden.

When I addressed him the tall man smiled a crooked smile. I remember wondering at the whitish yellow of his face, and noting that one eye stood more open than the other. And I thought that he looked feeble perhaps because of sickness or being very tired, but no other impression remains with me except that his hair was shiny with grease or oil. Instead of answering my question he showed me his watch that I might see for myself. Then he asked my name, and where I lived, in the gentle and playful manner of the aged, after which he pinched my cheek softly, smiled, and went on his way. So I ran across the road once more, going swiftly in the interests of exactness, then delivered my message, somewhat surprised that my uncle took no heed. I noticed though that he raised his hat to the tall gentleman twice, once when he thought he caught his eye but had not, again when he did catch it.

"Young man," my uncle said with great gravity, as soon as we were well on our way, "you ought to be a proud boy. You have spoken to the greatest man in all England—perhaps the greatest man in all the world. Even greater than Bismarck." Then he hushed his voice and added, "Lord Beaconsfield!" I am sure now that he experienced rich and wonderful emotions at mention of the name. From time to time he repeated it and commanded me to remember the incident. "You must remember everything. How he looked. What he said. Everything; so that you can tell them at home." Perhaps I seemed to bear the honor too serenely. At any rate he kept on thrusting questions: "What precisely did he say? How did he look?" and when my replies seemed unsatisfactory, he exclaimed, with some irritation, "I ought to have gone myself. Why didn't I?" I am sure now that my relative held the irresistible conviction that by some sort of magic, or laying on of hands, I must have received mysterious benefits, or made some mystical communion, or had been strangely and subtly transformed and enriched and ennobled, therefore touched to finer issues. I do not think that there was the slightest difference in his belief, in that respect, to beliefs held once that the touch of a king's hand could bestow health. That he accelerated his pace very decidedly must have been because he wished the sooner to spread the good news, or because of the poignancy of his exultant joy.

When opposite Sun Court, my uncle slackened somewhat, then slightly slapped his breast pockets in the manner of one searching by touch, and I understood, as children understand readily so many things their elders believe above juvenile comprehension, that the matter concerned cigars. But we passed the covered way and went a few yards, then the good man paused as if in absent-mindedness. "Dear me! I cannot understand how I could have forgotten," he said with annoyance in his voice. "Sunday too. Well, we'll walk a little further before going home." So we made a right about face and passed Sun Court once more. Like a shot it came to me that my uncle wanted to go down Sun Court but wished to be amply assured that no human eye beheld him. I knew exactly that such was the case because his actions closely paralleled mine when I filched cakes from the kitchen after scouting for unfriendly witnesses, there was that furtiveness and elaborate precaution about him. And I, knowing how things were, convinced that the buying of anything on a Sunday must be regarded as a detestable piece of business, moved in an atmosphere of dark disapproval. If you would reproduce the situation to-day and here, you must experience the adventure of buying a bottle of whiskey in a neighborhood in which every spectator may be a possible detective. Bigotry begat hypocrisy then as it does now.

The coast being clear my uncle turned swiftly and plunged into Sun Court, I following close and finding the whole business diverting. It was my first appearance in that place since the affair with the boy. To my astonishment the court lay deserted, like a theater in the day time. I had supposed that the "lower orders" did not observe Sunday, because Bill had so many tales to tell of his Sunday outings. But the shops were all closed, the fruit stalls were all turned on their edges and leaned against walls, the very roadway in Shepherd's Market was clear of traffic. Nothing seemed alive except a man here and another there, lounging and smoking; a boy carrying a baking tray covered with a white cloth under which lay the Sunday dinner which he was bearing home from the baker's; a news dealer with Sunday papers; a man in shirt sleeves sitting on a barrel. Otherwise it was a scene of row after row of closed business places, each with windows darkened by shutters secured with a padlocked iron bar. Shepherd's Market lay in a dull drowse, and, could I have known, behind locked doors citizens were spending their Sunday lying in bed until dinner-time. The day of relief from work was turned into a time of stagnation.

My uncle's pace, I noticed, was brisker than his Curzon Street mode, so brisk indeed that I had to go at half trot to keep up with him. Yet it was clear that he knew his way well enough in the labyrinth of little streets and alleys, for he turned at surprising angles, and darted through short cuts, while I wondered exceedingly at the new land that lay not much more than a stone's throw from our house. We turned into a paved square, close-packed with shuttered windows and very silent, and my uncle made his way to a side door with a glass panel, on which appeared the words

SEGARS AND TURKISH TOBACCO

My heart beat fast at the adventure as he opened the door, and a little hanging bell set up a persistent jangling. Pungent odors assailed me, chiefly of tobacco and snuff and cigar smoke, and the eddying clouds of the smoke above my head set me to imagining myself as a giant whose head touched the sky. A pleasant-looking man stood behind the counter. He wore a Turkish hat with a tassel, and a plush smoking jacket of fawn color trimmed in red at collar and cuffs, and spectacles hung low on his nose. About him there seemed to be a breezy carelessness, as one who broke the law but stood unblamed in the light of his own conscience. It was very evident that he and my uncle were not strangers to each other, for they fell into easy talk. I caught something said about a Whitechapel murder and a man named Waineright, and remember the thrill with which I looked at the tobacconist when he told my uncle that he had been down to see the house in which the murder had been committed, for that struck me as an unusual piece of daring. Then they went on to talk about Ireland, so I slipped into a world of finer life, imagining myself to be God as I watched the slow-whirling tobacco smoke, the interweaving blue and gray filminess of it, its swelling waves and hollows, and the moonlight-white of it when sun-touched masses floated out of the sunbeam and into shadow. I blew it and made fearful storms. Then, of a sudden, I became aware that before me were the open gates of a new world.

That world was a world of literature. That moment marked my entrance into it very definitely. I might have found literature another way, and doubtless would have. It is idle to speculate upon what might have happened should something that did not take place have chanced to occur. All I know is that there and then, in a dingy tobacco shop where common prints were sold for a penny, I suddenly entered into a world of wonder and beauty, wherein, after many wanderings, I came to touch hands with old and wise spirits.

The manner of the adventure was like this. Hanging on a string that ran along the wall, and in such position that I had to turn my head sideways to see, were many papers. On one was a picture showing four very gallant men gathered about a table, each holding high a glass, the center of attraction being a handsome man in brocaded coat, three-cornered hat, and jackboots. The most careless eye could see that they were having a tremendous time, what with hints given by swords, and bottles, and playing cards, and dice scattered on the floor. Running across the page under the picture I spelled out this, all of which I understood except the word "Gratis:"

DICK TURPIN, CLAUDE DUVAL, TOM KING, AND SIXTEENSTRING JACK.

Presented gratis to every purchaser of No. 20 of 3rd re-issue of Black Bess, or the Knight of the road.
5 New Splendid Coloured Pictures with Nos. 1, & 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6.
8 Other Splendid Coloured Pictures with Nos. 7 to 15.
7 Splendid Engravings with Nos. 16 to 22, making in all
TWENTY PLATES GRATIS.

Hanging by the side of that I saw the first page of a penny weekly with a picture showing a man in grave danger on a house top and him very noble in coat enriched with embroidery, and a sword. Below I read:

CHAPTER CCXL

THE OFFICERS CHASE DICK TURPIN OVER THE ROOF TOPS.

He saw that he was at the top of the house.
The danger was immense.
Should he stay where he was he must die or be captured.
Mounting to the top of the window-sill, and holding tightly for support, he carefully and slowly got to an upright position.
But his grasp was an insecure one.

The rest of it lay hidden. Not having that unquestioning faith in the hero's good fortune that came to me later, I thrilled with anxiety. It seemed impossible to leave the man in the midst of tragic and awful circumstances. Intrusive anxiety made me read the passage again and again, so that I actually memorized it; then I lifted the cover and tried to peer into the inside page by way of further investigation. It was the first time that printed matter had excited me to interest, the first time I really wanted to read. All the glory known to the discoverer of a new land filled me.

"Well?" said my uncle, after a long time of talk, looking down at me after he had adjusted his tie and laid aside the stub of his cigar, for he would not have dreamed of smoking in the street.

"Is there anything the boy wants?" asked the man in the smoking cap, at which my uncle made answer for me, saying, "Nothing at all." But he stared at me when I asked, "Please did that man get off the roof all right?"

"What man? What roof?" my uncle asked in an explosive way.

"He means Dick Turpin," explained the tobacconist. Then to me he said, "Yes. He got off all right. And he got into hundreds of other tight corners and out of them too."

"God bless my soul!" exclaimed my uncle. "Those penny dreadfuls are the ruination of the rising generation. They lead lads astray. There ought to be an Act of Parliament against them."

"No. No. No. No," said the tobaconist. "There's no particular harm in them. They give a boy a lively taste for ideas. If you don't mind . . ." Saying which he reached over the counter, took the serial from its string and handed it to me. Joyously I took it, almost unable to thank him for the overflowing gratitude and rapturous delight in me. It seemed almost a desecration to fold it up as the tobacconist advised, and when my uncle and I walked across the paved square I stepped to the marching music of my heart. But no sooner had we turned the corner, and were out of sight of the shop, than my uncle bade me give the paper to him.

"Those things are not fit for young boys," he said, as I obeyed, choking back my grief. "They are not respectable."

"But, but—the man gave it to me," I protested, trying to say what I must say quietly, but inwardly in a state of fierce rebellion.

"Your parents are looking after your reading," he said. "That's enough." So saying he tore the paper into neat pieces and laid the heap on a convenient window-sill from which they began to scatter before we had turned.

By way of atonement the well-meaning but mistaken man slipped a silver coin in my hand, but, instead of tranquillizing, the act excited me. He had been tyrannical and a tyrant cannot buy good will. I suppose he guessed nothing of the susceptible nerves and emotional organization of a boy. A mind fettered by prejudice could hardly do so. "Buy something instructive," he said, and beamed down at me. So the complexity of things engaged me until a liberating idea came and I got rid of the problem by secretly dropping the sixpence into the gutter, after which action the world seemed kinder and easier. The next day I found my way down to the tobacconist's and discovered, to my exceeding joy, that the copy destroyed was not the only one in the world. Thereafter, from time to time, over a period of more than half a year, aided and abetted by Bill the knife-boy, I bought the whole Dick Turpin series, going from Chapter CCXL backward and forward and thus getting a sort of fourth dimensional experience. Through that shabby gate I entered the world of literature.

4

Doubtless, by outward seeming, the way I took into literature has a dangerous look; no urge except impulse or whim, no end in view, no Polaris by which a course might be set. Yet, looking back, I see that I adventured tremendously, always full of eager happiness. If my victualizing houses were poor, at least I found in them buoyant companionship. What if I ran into morasses, and wandered into caves, and climbed tedious mountains? Nevertheless I came to the joy and beauty of things, finding many a quiet pasture on the way; many a twilight garden which those who follow the highway often seem to have missed. If I scrambled and hewed and wriggled a way through a literary jungle of tropic luxuriance, in retrospect it seems to have been a scene most richly hued. Those eight or nine years of furiously unrestrained reading have for me the quality of a glorious adventure. That lively interest that must burn in the heart of every explorer fired me. I was filled with unwavering determination to journey onward into the unknown, and I knew a wild joy that can never be known when a literary traffic policeman points the way, when the length of the day's journey is settled beforehand, when the highway is marked out, and the very mood indicated in which certain prospects of the literary pilgrimage must be viewed. For how can there be true adventure when it is known exactly what lies ahead?

As to that jungle, I recall reading serially, sometimes carrying three or four things simultaneously: *Sweeny Todd, The Demon Barber of Fleet Street; The Life and Adventures of Tom King the Highwayman; Sixteenstring Jack;* many of the *Jack Harkaway* series, which I still find denounced, though I cannot understand why, for they told of a youth of perseverance and endurance who adventured tremendously in a sort of the-whole-world-is-mine-and-no-man-shall-rob-me-of-any-corner-of-it spirit; *Three Fingered Jack, The Terror of Antilles; The Exploits of Charles Peace the Burglar; Jack Sheppard, the King of Prison Breakers; Robin Hood; The Newgate Calendar.* There were boys' weekly papers too which I shared with Bill, each of which carried three serials, the changes being rung on a tale with historical setting, a tale of adventure in foreign lands, and a tale of school life. In one of them I read Ambrose Bierce's *The Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge*, though I took no note of the author's name, but the immortal story clung to me.

But new prospects lie beyond jungles. I discovered presently that Jack Sheppard as hero had engaged the pen of Harrison Ainsworth, and so to him I went and found exactly that strong imaginative power to delight any healthy minded boy. In his *Rookwood* I came across my old favorite Dick Turpin. Then in rapid succession I read his *Guy Fawkes*, *The Tower of London*, *Old Saint Paul's*, and *The Star Chamber*. Because Lord Lytton had written of highwaymen and similar splendid scoundrels I tackled him by way of Paul Clifford, then hurdled into *Pelham*, and so to *Eugene Aram* which led me to Thomas Hood's poem of that name. After that there were *The Last Days of Pompeii*, the very rich and glorious *Rienzi*, and *The Last of the Barons*.

By that time there were well defined school duties, with unsympathetic books to be read, besides piano lessons with hours of practice, but still I trod my own path. In school it was easily possible to read surreptitiously, and during the piano practice it was no great trick to let the fingers play mechanical scales or abominable five-finger exercises while reading. For I was like one who had achieved some breezy hilltop commanding an extended horizon, with long and pleasant valleys leading to hills of gentle outline, and rose-colored mountains further on, with glimpses of an azure sea in the far distance. And I accepted what came to hand, as glad and grateful to be in the midst of things as was old Barthema when crossing the desert of Mecca.

CHAPTER II

The Rite of Education

I

THE first time I attended school was on the afternoon of a day serenely calm and bright, a week before the end of the term, and the place was Brewood, Staffordshire, where my mother rested to recuperate after the birth of her third child.

The countryside stands out in memory as a labyrinth of narrow lanes, all of them tree-shaded and so rarely traveled that grass and buttercups and daisies grew in them, carpeting them from side to side so that horses and carts seemed to move on velvet. Sometimes carters left things in nooks and bends of the lanes for days: spades, and milking stools, and rakes, and wheelbarrows, which struck me as trustfulness touching on stupidity. But it was an adventure to come upon such things, so I often wandered about the lanes looking for articles left, though I soon tired of searching and fell to wondering at the butterflies blue and orange-tipped that came fluttering over the hedges from neighboring fields of wheat and barley in which scarlet poppies made bright spots of color.

The cottage in which we lived stood in a set-off place, pushed, as it seemed, out of the lane by some playful giant who had tried to hide it with honeysuckle, but had failed to cover the red-tiled roof or the white chimney. Roses red and white and yellow peeped in through the windows. The cottager, a pleasant woman who though wrinkled always seemed to be in high spirits, had turned the strip between the lane and cottage into a garden of hollyhocks and roses and sweet Williams and delphiniums and gillyflowers. It was always murmurous with bees and full of perfume. The doors of the cottage, both front and back, stood open all day, so to pass through the house seemed like going through a gate set in a garden hedged by dog-rose bushes into another garden that was an endless wonder of gooseberry and raspberry bushes, apple trees, red and white currant bushes, and a peach tree trained to grow along a stone wall.

Under the peach tree I found a few broken and whole bricks, perhaps a dozen all told, so there was material for romance; because bricks and half bricks set on end alternately make a castle with embrasures. And a barbican is easily constructed out of a broken flower pot and two small jars. As for a moat containing real water, a feeding trough from the poultry yard did excellently. Drawbridge and portcullis were easy, given a little faith and imagination; and cannon could be fashioned from a hundred common things. So by the stone wall great battles were fought by paper men against barley blades who made terrific onslaughts; company after company of the enemy marching forth, crossing the moat with terrific loss to raise scaling ladders, making escalade on all sides that the defenders might know no repose, grappling with the invaded to fall to their deaths, for the barley folk were hardy and fierce and brave. But help came for the defenders in the form of forces that broke the state of siege by means of arrow-shaped flying ships, for I had invented air machines though my planes were launched by means of tremendous levers suddenly released. That assault from the air served the invaded ones as a miracle, for the barley folk, seeing that further fighting would be madness, surrendered and became royal subjects and yielded up their treasure. And with peace established my interest in matters always ceased and I passed to other adventure.

The stone wall stood for me as the boundary of a new world, for beyond it ran a shining stream that made silver music. I explored there with joyful zest, making discoveries of waterfalls a few inches high, Zambezis in miniature; of quiet pools in which minnows darted; of backwaters where frogs dived and swam; of an island a few feet in extent in which, I was firmly persuaded, no human foot but mine had ever been set. The rivulet made two wide turns, then broadened into a tiny lake with a low stone embankment, and there I sailed a ship that drew out of dock most beautifully with the slightest of breezes, and with a recumbent crew of paper officers and sailors of strangely suicidal tendencies. Beyond the little lake, at the further end of a rapid, I found the most silent place in the world. There the water disappeared into unexplored lands by a moss-covered way, through a yew hedge over the top of which I could see an ivy-wrapped church tower in a cluster of elms. Beyond the hedge I did not go because twice I saw a blackbird perched there which looked at me with quick bright eyes, highly suspicious and on guard, and knowing me for an intruder. I hoped to win his confidence in time, but it would not do to be too abrupt. He was the guardian of still waters. With time and infinite patience much might come to pass. And there were to be many and many to-morrows.

Each morning, after breakfast, the cottager went into the garden to cull flowers for the house and for my mother, and she would give me light upon their names and natures the while, for it amazed her that I knew nothing of the names of them. "'Tis refinement, 'tis grace, 'tis cleanliness that you find in a flower garden," she would say. "Small wonder that folk are so heedless in London town, having no flowers." Immediately upon giving me the bouquet she would take her knitting from her apron pocket and the clicking of her needles would begin. Activity from head to foot, from the velvet ribbon on her cap to the large buckles on her shoes, she was always at her knitting when going to and fro, knitting on her way to her beehives, knitting as she stood at the gate giving greeting to folks on their way to market, knitting at the fireside in the evening with the cat at her feet.

One day, while I stood looking at the geraniums that grew in dull red pots and stood in the window spaces, I heard, with the keenest delight, the fairy house-music: the singing of the kettle, the light clicking of the knitting needles, the drowsy murmur of the bees, the ticking of the cottage clock, the purring of the cat. That delicate web of sound was shattered when the cottager said to my mother, "I never saw a more beautiful sunrise than this morning. Rose and gold it was. And the world sang with the music of the birds. . . . 'Twas a morning to make the soul alive."

"How does the sun look when it rises?" I asked, then added, without waiting for an answer, in the eager manner of children, "Where does it rise? Can I get up and see it?"

"Goodness gracious me!" exclaimed she as she lifted amazed hands and dropped her knitting. "Did one ever hear the like? The boy's never seen a sunrise! Ne-ver seen a sunrise!" After a pause she added, quite inconsequently, "Why, he simply must go to school, ma'am. He must."

"He knows how to read," said my mother. "And he's young."

I said nothing because of some sudden thing that weighed on my spirit. To give up that glory of sunshine, my river, the hope of acquaintance with the guardian of those still waters, was like shattering fairyland into fragments. It was like a storm cloud veiling the sun. Almost I felt as though I had loosed some malevolent power with my speech. But I hoped for the best. Grown people so frequently forget.

"The boy may know how to read, fine enough, but a body can be ignorant having read all the books in the world," said the cottager. "The younger the better, whether 'tis school, or measles, or whooping-cough. The schoolmaster's a brother o' mine and the boy can start this very afternoon. Besides, 'tis a relief when the young ones are away out of hearing an' the world's quiet. A body can rest. There's peace." Therein, as I afterward discovered, she urged a most potent and prevalent reason for school-going, though one kept in the background.

But the die was cast. After the noonday meal the cottager led me to the village, past a place of tremendous interest where men were gathered to talk and trade, past the church and across a road to a schoolhouse, from the open door and windows of which came a noise of many voices. The while my mind dwelt upon my own folly in expressing that passing desire to see the rising sun, myself had blotted out a world that had just grown interesting. The blackbird would wonder and wonder, with no explanation possible.

The inside of the schoolhouse seemed to be a hall of tremendous length with a strange smell about it, also with a countless number of boys all looking at me with interested curiosity, many whispering, some pointing. Standing behind his desk which stood on a platform I saw the schoolmaster, Mr. Pearson. The cottager urged me forward and presented me by saying my name. Thinking it to be the proper thing to do I offered to shake hands, whereupon the boys broke out in unrestrained laughter which the schoolmaster quieted by cracking his cane on the desk. It became clear that one did not shake hands with schoolmasters. Presently, after a short conference during which the cottager seemed very earnest, Mr. Pearson addressed me in grand manner, saying, "Six times seven is what?" I wondered what he meant. Wondered what had to be done six times. Wondered of what there were seven. So I made no reply.

"Don't you know your twice two is four?" he asked, and I admitted ignorance. He shook his head.

"What about the alphabet?" he said, and I told him that I could read.

"That's not an answer," he told me. "Can you say your alphabet? A pretty kettle of fish when a boy says he can read but can't say his alphabet. . . . SILENCE!" This command was flung over the schoolroom, for there were sounds of voices in quarrel. "Let me hear you read," he said, handing me a ragged book and pointing to a page. I began, getting along famously, for it was easy enough.

"Enough," he exclaimed, taking the book from me. "I say it's a pretty way indeed they have in London, doing things backwards. A boy reading without knowing his A.B.C.'s. Well. Well. Well. Now our Staffordshire lads know their alphabets, our Staffordshire lads do. At the beginning they begin, they do. . . . Bailey! Step out to the front."

A freckle-faced and good-humored looking boy of my own height but much stouter appeared and him Mr. Pearson addressed. "Let this new boy hear you say your alphabet. . . . No. Wait. Let him hear you say it backwards Z Y X. Go on." And Bailey came off triumphantly. "Now, young fellow, Bailey shall teach you, he shall. You shall see how our Staffordshire boys learn things." Suddenly suspicion appeared to pervade him and he regarded me with a little frown. "Let me hear you say without the book what you just read. Go on. 'An old ape whose——' Go on. What's the rest of it?"

I repeated the first few words which rested in my mind, "'An old ape whose name was Sim once saw a man at work in a field,'" then stopped, a little fearful lest I had done something wrong in not remembering more.

"Sure you never learnt it by heart?" asked Mr. Pearson. "Sure you haven't got a Mavor's *Spelling Book* at home?"

The point of my honesty being established the cottager went away, Bailey led me off, Mr. Pearson stepped down from his throne, and a noisy hum filled the air. But after a long time spent in the corner with my tutor, in spite of mighty wrestling, the letters would not fit themselves into my mind in proper order. I knew them by sight and could name them, indeed could not remember when I had not known them, but they would not stay regimented in my mind in any approved order in spite of Bailey's "What comes after T?" and "What always goes in front of K?" But suddenly, when Bailey had given up in hopelessness and our relations had become social rather than educational, a great light came to me. Looking at the card I discovered that the letters fitted themselves exactly into a tune called "Auld Lang Syne" if things were made to fit near the end by saying "And double-you, X Y Z." Mentally I tried the experiment, once, twice, thrice, finding all to go well, then proclaimed my ability to Bailey, though reserving the manner of the trick. The secret was to remain mine.

"Go on," commanded Bailey. "All through with your eyes shut, and no cheating either," and all went very well when I fitted the names of the letters to the tune that ran in my head. "Now let's get it backwards," urged Bailey. "Everyone knows it that way." But in that fashion the tune would not fit at all, so we gave up the job as hopeless, nor can I repeat the alphabet that way to this day.

"That's how we do things in Staffordshire," said Mr. Pearson with triumph in his voice after I had recited before the assembled school. For the briefest of instants I felt happy, not at my acquirement but being rid of a nuisance. "But you've no cause to be proud, you haven't," declared the schoolmaster, misinterpreting my smile. "Tell the school how many pints in a quart."

Again I stood ignorant and again the good man became scornful and full of that reflex egoism called local pride. "Why, our boys know that even before they come to school," he told me. "It's what you call common knowledge, it is. Common knowledge. . . . Bailey, tell this young man how many pints in a quart. . . . Right. . . . Now how many quarts in a gallon? . . . Don't know that either, eh? . . . Well, listen and repeat after me: 'Two pints one quart: four quarts one gallon.'" So I repeated without the slightest idea whether a gallon was the size of a cup or of a house. The words carried no intelligible context. I think that was all I learned at Brewood school, except a song sung daily when we gathered for the afternoon. It struck me as entirely meaningless, for learning by ear it seemed to run,

We thank the law for thiser food
And every other knee for good.
Let manner to 'er soul begin
The bread and lie send down from En——Ah-man.

2

"Polish," said my Uncle Allen one day, after we had returned to London, "is what all children need. A few accomplishments. Music, for instance. And how to conduct themselves. Good manners are neglected nowadays." He was in pompous vein, very emphatic, very knowing, very wise indeed.

"What do you think of Miss White's?" asked my father.

"The Toops send their children there. It is well spoken of, but I do not advise in these matters because——" said my mother.

With such unfavorable indications in the air I effaced myself. I knew it for an opening theme. Miss White's Private and Select School had been mentioned several times, always favorably, as an institution offering not only the rudiments of an elementary education, but also music and deportment.

But parents had the habit of deciding as gods decide, working to some purpose hidden from children, it seemed to me. The great calm law that stretched beyond our young knowledge wove a pattern in which we were the threads. And, as good

Thibetans dedicate their first born to celibacy as lamas, so my good parents destined sometimes that I should be a musician. When I first learned of the decision I made demur because from private advice from my cousins, I knew something of weary hours spent at the piano, whereas I preferred to spend my time in reading, or in a new-found delight, drawing. Already the pages of my book were plentifully sprinkled with vignettes done in pencil.

"Look at your Uncle Allen," said my parents. "What good company he makes! How he entertains! Company is not complete without him. Wouldn't it be nice to play the piano as he does? Wouldn't it be nice to be looked up to? And look at your cousins!"

"I do not want to show off in company," I said.

"Enough, young man. It doesn't matter what you want," my father retorted. "Children are not to argue."

So it became clear that a charmed circle had been completed, the clearer because of the argument of affection which is impossible of refutation. "No child with any love for its parents could object," put in my mother.

I went up to my room, took out the little black book which my mother had given me; it was *First Arithmetic*. I regarded it for awhile with large distaste, then found means of self-expression. For on the inside cover I drew a picture which I labelled Between Two Foes. It showed a tree somewhat exiguous as to branches, because they were difficult to draw, and on the top of it a bird with outspread wings. I was the bird. On the ground, with gun pointed at the bird, stood a man. That was my father. Coiled about the tree trunk and threatening the bird appeared a snake with open jaws and far-reaching fangs, which symbolized school. The picture hinted many things which words could not utter concerning my own doom, and having finished it I felt decidedly better, though I pitied my sister who failed to grasp the symbolism. "The bird ought to fly away," she said, whereupon I indignantly pointed out that dark demoniac powers held it spellbound, inventing on the spur of the moment, for the simple solution she offered had not occurred to me.

Of the first impression of Miss White's select institution everything has vanished in a mist except going there in a hired carriage with two gray horses, and the memory of a lady in long curls and porcelain-blue eyes sitting in a room with thick carpets, and three tall curtained windows that gave on Mount Street, while my parents sat side by side on a blue sofa. While the three of them talked they drank amber-colored wine and occasionally nibbled at a wafer. My sister and I sat on chairs, side by side, behaving, I in a state of extreme depression because of the environment. I tried to avoid looking at the piano which stood for me almost as a shrine of sorrow, if not a baleful monster; and the marble hand that stood upon it, an ornament on which Miss White kept her many rings when not in use, looked like a sacrificial emblem. Now and then I caught words that carried miserable import, Behavior, Gentility, Proper Influence, Learn to Enter a Room, Accomplishments, Politeness. Once Miss White seemed to be overjoyed at her success with a certain "Master Stephen, the son of an Honorable." She half whispered the name. But I went off into one of those enchanted mental wanderings common to the young, by a way which only children know. A word, a sound, a fragrant memory is enough to open wide the gates to imaginings. Nor did I come back to common things until there were bowings, and courtesyings, and mutual assurances that everyone concerned bore the welfare of everyone else in mind. Then my sister and I were left alone for a little while, during which I confided to her that everything was "rotten," which opinion she accepted with a nod. Next a boy threw open the double doors so that we seemed to be suddenly and shamelessly exposed to a room full of boys and girls, a dozen or more, who were seated at long tables. And Miss White, like a queen, towered above every living creature there. On the wall behind her, above her head, hung a framed legend done in bright colors that read.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

"Now, young ladies and gentlemen, remember your deportment," said Miss White, shaking her curls by nodding her head.

"What is the proper thing to do? What should be done in polite company when visitors arrive?"

A little girl with a large blue sash stood up and made answer in a sing-song way saying: "After the entrance of visitors, explain the import of any conversation."

"That's right," said Miss White. "I would rather that a young gentleman had given the answer. Why are boys so backward?" She asked that question of the ceiling. . . . "But of course we need not explain just now. We were about to talk of The Influence of Association, let us say. But what about chairs? Boys will answer this time. You, Llewelyn."

"Why, I think it's this. A gentleman rises——"

"'Rises upon the entrance——' Go on," prompted Miss White.

"Yes. Rises upon the entrance of ladies and, er, then he——"

"'A gentleman rises upon the entrance of ladies but does not offer——' What?"

"Does not offer his chair," declared Llewelyn with triumph in his voice.

"Except. What is the exception? Come, now, Master Llewelyn."

"Except the lady is tired," hazarded Llewelyn.

"Nonsense. . . . Except in his own house when others are available."

Then Miss White turned to me and there was that dangerous sweetness about her that I always associated with catechizing. "Now, you are at the door and about to step into a room full of company. How do you go into a room?"

It seemed to be a question without an answer, therefore a dangerous one. After searching my mind I said, "Just go in."

"Ah! But there are many ways to go in. There is the right way and there are several wrong ways. You must go in in the right way. We must train ourselves. We must not go in in a slovenly or ugly way. There is a way that deserves admiration. . . . Now watch me." She left the room by the double door, though in keeping with the ritual she waited until Stephen had opened it, which he failed to do until commanded. Then, quite surprisingly, she entered by the side door, coming in in what struck me as a fluffy kind of way and with a smile that quickly withered into her usual seriousness. She made a courtesy and a little artless gesture with her hand, then found a chair without looking for it with the nicest judgment in the world, the seat being vacated by Llewelyn who told Stephen to "shove up and make room" and emphasized the command with an elbow poke. Being called upon to act out the little play my sister came off fairly well, but my attempt with a bow substituted for the courtesy was calamitous.

"Smile. You *must* smile, if only a l*ee*-tle," the lady commanded, whereupon I screwed up my face. "A smile embellishes a commonplace face and beautifies an ugly one," she told me, which set me privately to classifying my own style.

That particular and incidental lesson in deportment being ended, we passed on to a reading lesson in which I conducted myself with promise. But other days there were lessons in deportment which lasted a whole morning, though theory was not supported by fact. Thus exemplary or knightly conduct, as Miss White often termed it, implied the retrieving of anything dropped by the lady, and ladies seemed to be much given to dropping things in Miss White's ideal world. In practice the girl who dropped book or pencil had to pick it up, nor did any boy show the slightest indication to give outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace acquired in the deportment lessons. In Miss White's case matters were different. The requirements of etiquette enabled her to sacrifice us boys without blushing; placing her chair; opening and closing doors so that she might pass in and out in queenly dignity; picking up her handkerchief; running into the other room for her smelling salts; bringing her a glass of claret; waiting on her in fifty other ways. Did one fail in attention it was to be crushed and confounded as guilty of the sin of bad manners, or to be branded as common. And then open derision; disgrace; the threat of losing caste.

But it was great fun, taking it all in all, those deportment lessons, especially when the schoolroom became, for temporary educational purposes, a church. Chairs had to be arranged to stand for pews. We were instructed to enter "quietly and reverentially," which on occasion required considerable self-control when a boy in the rear privately expressed his superabundant sense of humor by administering pinches and sometimes pin-prods to the boy ahead. Like an instructor calling out in an old-fashioned quadrille, Miss White would declaim, "Strangers wait in the vestibule for ushers to show them to a seat. . . . Never enter a pew until invited. . . . Rise, kneel and sit as you see others do. . . . Find the place in the hymn books and point it out to strangers. . . . When books or fans are offered, accept or refuse with a bow. . . . Do not smile."

Sometimes the chairs were made to serve as seats in an imaginary horse-carriage and the girls would pretend to be busy with a fan, a parasol and a rug; boys would assist the inefficient lady to alight or enter, and a running comment from Miss White advised us that we must refrain from sitting next to the lady without asking permission, that we were to declare our preference for sitting with our backs to the horses, that we should give instructions to the coachman after ascertaining the wishes of the lady. Volunteers among the boys for the office of coachman were numerous, for the job left a mind free for higher and happier things than etiquette.

Also there were instructions in conduct when attending what were styled Fancy Fairs. Then the schoolroom would be a sort of bazaar in which the girls attended to fictitious stalls on which books and slates stood for pincushions and painted china, all of which were to be sold for phantom charitable causes. "You are going to do it all without a single hint from me," Miss White would announce, but in spite of previous instruction it always became necessary for her strong hand to guide us through a sea of forgetfulness. Like a priestess she would deliver counsels of perfection. "A gentleman carries his hat in his hand," she said, at which I broke out into a grin, imagining myself carrying it in my mouth, like a dog. She caught me, and, misconstruing my merriment, said, "And remember that no gentleman laughs in any public place. . . . Praise everything that you see. . . . And always buy. . . . In buying, no gentleman will accept change but will say, 'Pray accept the balance for the object for which you are working.' Repeat that after me. Now. Altogether. 'Pray accept the balance . . !'"

Stephen, son of the Honorable, whispered, "Catch me buying any silly pincushions," and went on to show how it would be possible to avoid financial difficulties without forfeiting the position of a responsible member of society by keeping one's pockets full of small change and counting out the exact amount privately. And it seemed to me, as I listened, that to go along genially and adventurously dropping half-sovereigns for things one did not want was bad enough, but to be expected to forget the silver and then look pleasant about it was altogether impossible.

"What are you two whispering about?" questioned Miss White.

"Admiring the pincushions and all that," said Stephen airily, but I saw doubt in Miss White's eye.

"Refined and polished people do not whisper," said Miss White. "Propriety prevents. Nor may you point. Wave the whole hand or indicate with a slight motion of the head toward the object."

"But suppose you want one flower in a flower-bed of hundreds and hundreds? How is the man to know if you don't point?" asked Stephen.

"A gentleman with the gift of words can describe," declared Miss White. "However, neither questioning nor criticism is permitted to the young, please remember. Nor argument. That comes with growing reason."

3

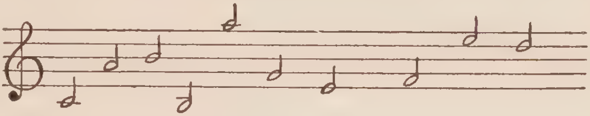
"That comes with growing reason," were words often in Miss White's mouth. I recall them being applied in the case of my first piano lessons. Those were half-hours in which more words not in my vocabulary were launched at me than new words are launched in a month's training in a new science; minims, crochets, semi-braves; C above the line and C below the line and C itself, and C's that were leger lines above and C's that were leger lines below. Following each lesson there were hours at a silent keyboard. "The sound will come with growing reason," she explained, but at the end of two weeks I did not know the name of a single note.

She deputed Stephen to "help" me, and in a couple of minutes I had grasped the whole simple fundamental scheme of musical notation.

"All you got to do is to think of Cabbage Fed," he assured me.

"Cabbage Fed!" I exclaimed.

"Yes. That's how my sister showed me. Like this." He sketched notes in this fashion, clumsily, on a piece of ruled paper.



"That's all," he said. "Anyone can learn that and think of it when you learn a new piece. You get to know them soon."

I found that way efficacious.

4

In spite of gymnastics of deportment and the daily hour of religious instruction, all that parading of lofty ideals and heroic example had no perceptible bearing on the daily life. I cannot look upon my school education as anything but a process of incrassation in which individuality was beaten down and an attempt was made to mash an inner life into a sausage of dull commonplaceness. I doubt very much whether a thought of the emotional organization of a child ever entered into the minds of any of my teachers; nor do I think, taking it by and large, that matters have very much changed, though to-day certain theories having to do with the soul of a child have grown into a considerable literature. I am thoroughly convinced that a child rises above mediocrity in spite of school education, not because of it. The professional exerciser of influence does little more than surround children who are keenly susceptible to esthetic ideas with a withering atmosphere.

In Miss White's Private and Select School there were physical cruelties as sheer as cruelties inflicted upon helpless natives by ignorant conquistadores. Doubtless custom reduced the horror of them, because children and teacher seemed absolutely indifferent while the torture proceeded.

My thoughts, while Miss White expounded at great length, always turned to the visualization of the thing described, and that visualization had to find graphic expression just as it does to-day, when I cannot easily listen to a talker without making rude sketches on paper or tablecloth, or dinner napkin.

We used slates in those days, which, while the lesson proceeded, lay on the table in front of us while we sat with folded arms. But with arms folded lightly over a slate it is easily possible to sketch furtively, if one is provided with a pencil not too scratchy; and the story of the flood, which engaged Miss White on one particular morning, offered strong possibilities decorative and imaginative, as well as mildly humorous. So I drew an ark, then the girl at my right became interested and slipped colored crayons into my hand. Thereupon I endowed Noah with tremendous notions of color decoration and showed him painting his ship vermilion and green, while I achieved verisimilitude by making a final stroke of his brush end near the bow and leaving the space between brush and prow unpainted. I gave Noah a pipe. The ark itself rode on a rising tide, and seaward great waves rose and fell, while a noonday sun glittered on them in many colors. Noah's waggish family urged and bestrode strange beasts, making holiday out of world disaster. From a near-by hill jeering neighbors made sarcastic remarks, and in the background there were necessary and interesting anachronisms of architectural nature. Above gray clouds sat the heavenly host, disposed to amuse itself with human affairs as offering relief from intolerable boredom, for all of us children were firmly convinced that heaven was insufferably dull. The throne offered so many dazzling and delightful opportunities for decoration that I left it untenanted and put its owner on a cloud, together with an informal assembly of angels, though the disposal of wings, in such grouping, presented difficulties. God was a venerable figure, bald and with a beard large and full, an aquiline nose, a pious forehead, a gown very rich in color; he was serious of mien. I took vast pains with his robe, striping it in shouting reds, blues and yellows.

"Put one of those things on God's head. . . . Things like plates. You know," whispered the girl. So I added a halo which gave the appearance of a straw hat worn jauntily. My inspirer went on, "Now things like light ought to come out of the head. . . . Let me do it." She took my slate, moving with extreme caution and with an eye on Miss White, then added a radiating effect to the halo, which gave an appearance of projecture of fluttering ribbons. She also dressed Mrs. Noah in luscious green. Then Stephen, who sat at her right, nodded high approval at me and shaped his mouth into the word "Good!", after which he secured the slate. By that time every child in the room knew of some good-humored mystery in the air and eagerness was manifested freely, while the unconscious Miss White read diligently from Holy Writ. It became a sort of private art exhibition in which those who viewed expressed themselves by adding details which were sterile on the imaginative side, being largely confined to pipes and walking canes and umbrellas of a primitive kind. Once only sudden danger came, when Miss White, looking up, asked Llewelyn the length of the ark, to find him in desperately unprepared condition.

"It was painted red and green," he asserted, whereupon she became mildly sarcastic.

"What nonsense! I will read the passage again," she said, and had no sooner started than trouble broke out among the art admirers. For an enthusiastic young lady of seven summers slapped the face of a boy who seemed too leisurely in his inspection.

"Such behavior!" said Miss White. "And in scripture lesson too. I never did . . . A young lady acting in that fashion while I am reading this lovely story. Does the Bible tell children to slap one another's faces? . . . No. Master Harry. NO. Don't you dare rub that out. Bring me that slate."

Harry, in comrade loyalty, had started to efface the picture in the popular but surreptitious method. That is, one spat upon the slate, found passing interest in the little white bubbles if time permitted, then licked the palm of the hand and made a great, wet smear, finishing with the coat sleeve. Harry had taken the first step, but thus commanded halted in his erasure and went to the judgment seat with the exhibit.

"Nasty boy," she said. "How dare you offer me that? Wipe that off first."

Then Miss White viewed the richly colored picture. Viewed and expressed pain and horror. She held the picture up to public view and told us that we embittered her life. She expressed incredulity that such things could be. She asked us if she could believe her own eyes. I began to understand that what I had thought to be an interesting experiment had become something very much like a grievous sin. So, while she offered her remarks to one and all, I thought every word addressed to me personally.

"I have spared no pains to teach you reverence, and yet there is such a horrible thing as this. I am shocked. What do all these lessons mean? How to go in a church; how to behave there; the respect you owe to me and to God. What are your parents paying me for? Haven't I taught you the commandment, 'thou shalt not make thyself the likeness of any thing in the heaven above or the earth beneath'? Don't you know that God sees this? What must He think of it? . . . Harry, did you draw this?"

Harry being thoroughly man, and one of my friends, answered, "Yes."

Then, in no spirit of championship of truth, but because of artistic pride, I announced the true authorship. The confession had hardly been spoken when Agnes of the blue sash confessed to the light rays and a pipe. Stephen admitted a gun in the hand of one of the sons of Noah who rode an elephant. Llewelyn pleaded guilty to an umbrella. A passion for confession had set in, which Miss White silenced.

"Who drew this?" she asked, indicating the halo and rays. "That's the great sin. That's what I want to know."

"Me," I announced.

"Me too, some of it," said Agnes.

"I mean the figure of God," she said, putting things compactly, and I felt a thrill of pride that she recognized the figure. "Why did you do it?"

I found the question impossible of answer.

"I ask you why?" she repeated, and towered over me, like a giant genie filling the air. "Rub it out at once. . . . No. Not that way. . . . How often have I told you that cleanliness is next to godliness? Use your sponge."

The sponge, that dangled from the slate by a string, had long been dry. Indeed, all of our sponges were more in the line of symbols than things of use, like the buttons that we wore on our sleeves. While I chewed and licked the sponge, then cleaned the slate, Miss White pronounced judgment from which there was no appeal, prefacing the sentence with denunciations and censures, and interjecting parenthetical remarks about her own feelings.

"I ought to punish the whole school by rights. . . . But I shall deal with the worst ones. You, for drawing profane pictures, must stand on a chair with your face to the wall and hold up four slates until I tell you to get down. You, Harry, for telling a lie, will stand up beside him and hold up two slates. You, Agnes, being a girl, will stand up with them and hold up your hands. You have helped in the disgraceful thing. That's how we punish irreverent children. It deserves more. If ever you do it again, there will be more. . . . And while you are being punished, the whole school will repeat, ten times, the First and Second Commandment."

Obediently the three of us climbed chairs, but Miss White herself had to be executioner as well as judge, arranging the torture, for no child could have managed to lift four slates to arm's length height. Then the dull monotone behind us began, "Thou shalt have none other gods but me." In a very few seconds the pain in my arms became unendurable, as though I had been in torture for hours. But every time I lowered my arms from sheer exhaustion Miss White would sharply command me to raise them. Presently I found a little relief by following Harry's example, lowering my arms gradually until my elbows rested upon my chest. Yet the slates slipped and slid because of my aching and powerless thumbs. Then the judge-executioner's vigilance relaxed, and blessed relief, the three of us stood with our arms hanging loosely at our sides, the slates between our toes and the backs of the chairs. But from behind us the intonation still went on. When Agnes turned to me I saw that tears were rolling down her face. My world at once became misty. Harry was sniffing. Presently Agnes whispered, "We don't have to do it. I won't if you won't." Evidently she took revolt for granted, because she added, "You go first." Perhaps a telepathy exists among children, or perhaps young and sensitive lives have unrealized modes of communication that are lost with the years. We made no agreement, gave no sign, spoke no word. Yet, simultaneously as birds wheel in air, or as fish turn in a pool, we left our penance stools and got to the floor.

"Back to your punishments," said Miss White sharply, but disregarding the order we advanced and stood before her. As we stood Agnes's hand reached out and took mine, perhaps Harry's too. Words of protest came to me out of nothingness. I have a clear-cut remembrance of saying, "I am me and you must not tell me what to do," with passionate emphasis, because at the back of my mind sat a wondering how it came to pass that a stranger should be able to cause me pain. Agnes said, "And I won't stand on chairs. Besides, it isn't fair."

Unfurnished by precedents to guide her Miss White fell into mild scoldings, then plucked the glory out of our revolt by telling us that had we been good a moment longer she would have forgiven us. As it was she would overlook our rebellion if we would remember that reverence stood as a first duty.

"She's a cat, I hate her. I'll punish her too. I'll hide her silly rings, you see if I don't," whispered Agnes when we were at the table again. Finding the threat stimulating and exciting, I whispered back, "Don't forget to do it."

5

Whether Agnes was moved by the spirit of revenge, or whether a quickened imagination moved her can never be known. But what happened is this.

In the park through which we often passed on our way to and from school stood a giant beech tree with a hollow place near its root. I, living in an enchanted land, had turned the hollow into a mighty cave and told stories of my own invention about it. So in the spirit of the game we would discover treasure placed there by ourselves, small colored pebbles and snail shells, and we kept the game up with eager happiness. But one day, with great seriousness, Agnes prophesied to some of us that at noon the pebbles would be turned to real jewels. "There will be di'mon's, and rings, and a gold brooch, all guarded by a gold snake with red eyes, and anyone who wants jewels can have one." We were to look while on the way to afternoon school, but to touch nothing until she came. When Harry showed skepticism, wanting to know where the jewels would come from, she said, "It's a witch being punished. A 'Rabian Nights put them there. She has robbed people and been cruel, and it serves her right." We were interested but indifferent considering the strangeness of the case.

On our way to school several of us gathered at the tree, honorably waiting for Agnes. She came skipping happily, the picture of radiant joy. "You can look," she said. Down we went on our knees, and set to work scratching among the pebbles, and presently discovered many rings, a brooch, a bracelet or two and some silver shoe buckles.

"And look at the snake," Agnes cried, pointing to the grass a foot or so away from the tree, where a ruby-eyed gold snake reared its head, one of Miss White's rarely exhibited arm ornaments. So we shared the rich and magnificent glories very amicably, and put them in our pockets among slate pencils, and marbles, and other things precious to children. On the way to school there were activities in trading and exchange, the green stone brooch which had fallen to me being offered and given for a glass luster hanging belonging to a lamp, and that in turn exchanged for the snake, which held vast attractions for me. For a little while we argued about selling a ring to an apple woman for apples, and might have done so had not time pressed. But it seemed a bewildering business to find Miss White in tears and frantic mood. Scolding and threatening, and talking about policemen and prisons, she herded us into the front room, then dramatically pointed to the symbol of suffering, the marble hand that stood on the piano, naked and shorn of its many rings. Next, in the manner of a conjurer about to do a trick, she took down from the mantel-shelf a silver filagreed box which she opened and turned upside down, while we stood watchful and interested. Then she became accusatory, and very much louder, and much more excited, asking, "Who did it? Who is the thief?" That word closed our lips. It set me to planning ways and means to dispose of my booty.

"You might as well tell, because I know perfectly well," declared Miss White, addressing the ceiling.

Then she wept a little while, but when she cleared again spoke of prisons. Going to the door she told us that we would be locked in until she returned with a policeman, but evidently changed her mind, for, in an excess of grief, she threw herself onto the sofa and wept into the antimacassar. "I don't even want to know the name of the thief if the jewels are returned," she told us, sobbing.

Now my possession of the snake worried me, for at mention of prison I visualized stone walls, and clanking chains, and the hangman. So, the piano stool being within reach of my hand, I placed the ruby-eyed snake upon it, then added the glass luster which Stephen passed to me, though that formed no part of the cavern treasure; indeed, to the knowledge of us all it had been exchange currency in the school for weeks, its value elastic and varying. Miss White saw, and had an inspiration. "There is one honest child," she said. "How many others are there? . . . I will go into the next room and come back in two minutes. If the stolen things are returned I will not call the policeman," and in stately manner went through the folding doors, pulled them together, but not quite, and silence fell for a little while.

"She's cheating and peeping," whispered Llewelyn. "Give her the old things back. I don't want any of her silly rings."

We made restitution, passing the treasure from hand to hand.

"I forgive everyone," said Miss White, when she returned and made swift inventory, but immediately flawed a fine purpose by adding, "But for the good of your own souls I want to know who did it. A liar is the most horrible of creatures. A voice will whisper in your hearts. Obey that voice."

Apparently inward monitors remained dumb, so she became insinuatingly diplomatic. "All I want to know is this. Where did you children find them?" The question being noncommittal there were replies in ragged chorus and soon the trail to the tree stood revealed.

"And who told you they were in the tree, Agnes?"

Most surprisingly Agnes answered, "I knew. I saw a robber put them there." She richly colored things by adding, "I knew he was a robber so I just looked. He had a wooden leg."

Miss White drew a long breath. We knew that she disbelieved and knew that she stood justified in her disbelief. Stephen and I nudged one another in excess of emotion, realizing that deep gulfs yawned before Agnes. We knew that she had massed her forces in one tremendous push and that no reserves were behind the assault. Already big tears stood in her eyes. But the word "robber" had awakened something in me. Without any conscious effort a picture began to take shape in my mind. So I testified, supporting Agnes.

"Nonsense," ejaculated Miss White.

"But there was a robber. I saw him," I asseverated with emphasis. There were two I's in me, one wondering at the tale of the other. "He came in while I was practicing the piano, Miss White. Just before I stopped. He came in on tiptoe." The critical self in me suddenly remembered the mythical leg of wood which would be noisy, and I made swift suggestion of a rag bound round the stump end, but Miss White did not seize the opportunity. I went on, "I asked him what he wanted and he said he had bought them and you sent him in to get them."

"What nonsense," said Miss White.

"I saw him too," declared Stephen, coming as an unexpected ally. "I saw him on the pavement counting the rings. He gave me a penny and here it is." He exhibited a coin.

Miss White seemed to be shaken in her doubts. "How was he dressed?" she asked of me, forcing me into difficulties.

Suddenly I thought of my own father and began to give a detailed description of him: his beard, the color of his hair, his height. Then by way of blurring fact into fiction I added,

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"And he was dressed like a baker. There was flour all over his coat."

"I saw him too," declared Harry. "Downstairs. He smelled like a baker too."

"And he had a little black dog following him," said Agnes. "It had a blue ribbon round its neck."

Miss White sighed and shook her head. "Girls will not interfere," she declared, championing sex inequality in law. She brought increased pressure to bear on our social consciences. "I thought I was training high moral characters but I find I have been bringing up vicious creatures and children without conscience. I don't know what's going to become of the young generation. I thought you knew right from wrong, but I see you do not." Then she launched the terrible charge.

"YOU ARE NOT RESPECTABLE."

She let that sink in, but to us both situation and the imagined character had already become uninteresting. "Serves her jolly well right," whispered Stephen, and the words expressed the truth that we rather enjoyed the spectacle of her suffering as audiences always enjoy the spectacle of the villain in torment. The discomfiture was hers, not ours. Even the knowledge that we would have to make expiation lost its edge. Presently, as she went on talking, denunciatory in mood, someone yawned, then another, and another. The actress had overdriven her audience and destroyed her own prestige. Simulating an emotion she no longer felt she had become a charlatan. She was artificial, and children detect artificiality with unerring swiftness. Realizing the situation she fell back on power, in the way of despots since the world began. So she launched her mandate. "The whole class will write out the Ten Commandments all the afternoon."

Once, during the afternoon, an offer of amnesty was made. "If any child wishes to tell the truth I will forgive it," she said. But we presented a solid front to the enemy. Personal interest could not destroy fellowship.

You must see the scene as a tableau vivant representing indignant self-pity unable to depress the buoyant Spirit of Joy.

6

Our family often went to Brighton, a seaside town in Sussex. The memory of it enkindles much emotion for me as a vision comes of red brick sidewalks, of that strange building the Pavilion, of white cliffs and pleasant sea beach, of flower gardens and aquarium. Sometimes we bathed in the sea in a silly way, being pulled out to the water's edge in great clumsy boxes on wheels called bathing-machines, and putting on heavy serge garments that scratched and chafed, after which we floundered about miserably ten minutes or so. A lusty "bathing-woman" was always in attendance. On the esplanade there were interesting goat-drawn carriages in which children rode up and down, the vehicles bright with paint and brass, and built to resemble the conveyances of that time, dog-carts and wagonettes and broughams and cabs. But the place most to my liking was out at the end of the old pier and down some water-soaked black steps. There, under the planking and among the piling, it was strangely quiet and pleasant watching the sea rise and fall in slow, smooth beats like the heaving of a chest; where the winds sighed softly; where the pale light made the scene seem like fairyland. It enchanted me, that cool green of the water, the white lacings where sea touched piling, the rich black of the timber, the translucence of the seaweed and its smell. Sometimes a golden sunslant touched the water in a way that made it possible for the eye to follow the lance of light down and down until the sea-sand could be seen. After that I would wander in imagination on the ribbed sea-floor, discovering black rocks and waving weed, or a fish hanging motionless, or terrifying crabs.

There came to that place sometimes, rowing a boat, a man with a stubby white beard. Often he tied his craft to the steps and let it float in the shade, while he smoked a short, black clay pipe, sitting the while with his left elbow on his knee and his chin propped on his left hand. A rough-haired, iron-gray dog with knowing eyes was his companion. I felt tremendously grateful when the man told me that I might sit in the boat if I cared to do so, the which I did. My sense of propriety forbade me the asking of questions, but I set him down to be a sailor of vast experience who came to that quiet place to remember things seen. And as I sat, with the boat rising and falling so gently, hearing the silver ripple of laughter as sea touched boat, sometimes catching sight of a brown sail beyond the pier and often watching the screaming, wheeling gulls, it seemed to me that a seaman's life must be the most glorious one in all the world. Once, gaining courage to break the silence, and it took courage because of the peaceful quiet, I told the man my thought and asked him how one began to be a seaman.

He leaned over a little to look into the depths as if to read an answer, then looked into the bowl of his pipe, next set his pipe on the thwart, then plucked at his chin awhile.

"There's sailors and sailors," he told me. "I'm not what you'd call a sailor. Three times I went to sea and three times the ships was lost. First 'twas the *Mistletoe*, Mr. Heywood's yacht. In the Solent the *Alberta* ran us down, and Queen Victoria on board, mind you. Not on the *Mistletoe* she was, but on the *Alberta*. Next it was the *Fanny*, a coast-guard boat. She went down in the Irish channel. Next it was the *Hydaspes*. Off Dungeness we went down when the *Centurion* ran into us. Each time a steamboat did the mischief. And why? Because steamer men ain't seamen. That's why. . . . Another thing. Did you notice them stylish people who come down here in what they call yachting clothes, white things, with a straw hat, and with telescopes under their arms? 'Course you did. They're not sailors. They're play boys. Well, to play's good. I might go up to London and play townsman; I say I might. Now up in London do you ever happen to notice men who are not stylish, going about dressed like sailors? that is like sailors of the theater? If you did, and if you heard 'em talk sailor talk, the chances is they'd be just steamboat men playing sailor. But if you got your eye on a man that didn't look like a sailor at all, and didn't want to be taken for one, the chances is that you'd be lookin' at a seaman all right. What I mean to say is that there's respectable sailors and not respectable sailors. A respectable sailor wouldn't ship in a steamboat, and a steamboat man couldn't be a respectable sailor. . . . So there you are."

It was all so amazingly cryptic that I sank into silence. Nor did he offer another word just then. It dawned upon me feebly at the time, stronger afterward, that he denounced the affectation of heroism in people who never did anything heroic, bogus dare-devils, those who tried to pass themselves off as something they were not. A full half-hour must have passed before he said, "I sit here because here people don't come, except a lad whose name is Carpenter, a quietish lad, as you might say. It fair makes me sick to see people pretendin'. Men pretendin' they're rich. Women pretendin' they're rich. Old Ben the fish-curer who's never been out of sight of land pretendin' he's an old skipper. Young cockney sparks from the city who don't know a anchor from a handspike pointing out ships to girls who pretend they don't know, to please the lads. So I want this place to be quiet in. It's a seemly place."

That his young lad was Edward Carpenter, the poet of *Towards Democracy*, I did not know.

7

That incident under the pier gives an example of what I mean by those tentacles about a man by which he touches others, and, touching, gains something not at all to be found in the educational curriculum. Their combined influence seems to weave a web about one. They establish a sort of atmosphere in which he moves, and because of which he acts in a certain fashion hardly to be explained. They make a way along which a man must tread, guiding his migrations and aspirations. At least it is so, and always has been so in my case. For example, because of what that boatman said fifty years ago, it is not so long since I gave a man, who lived upon my place as a kind of guest, full and fair notice that his continued presence did not please me. He aimed to write a novel, which was well enough, though a poor ambition, inasmuch as his desire appeared not so much to write something worth writing, as to be talked about, and to be made much of by the ladies, and to be written about in the local paper. He was sharp and he was cunning, but it was his unhappy habit of appropriating the ideas of others and twisting them a little to give them his personal brand that annoyed me. He was chameleonic. All of that I might have put up with, but when he, who could not saddle a horse until I taught him, after managing to sit on an old mare without falling off too frequently, began to pose as a cavalry man before ladies, then my old man under the pier came to mind and his hatred of pretence flooded my memory, so that my capacity for endurance was exhausted. However, that is leaping ahead fifty years.

8

It happened to be at Brighton that my future came under discussion for final disposition. Always it had been assumed that I should become either a something in a bank, or a clerk in the Civil Service, or a musician—according to the prevalent sphere of influence, that of my father, my uncle or my mother. My wishes were not consulted. My idea of sailoring was strenuously resisted.

"A banker," said my father, with a quick look at me, "is looked up to. He is respected."

"Every boy gets sailoring in his head," observed my uncle, very urbane. "Boys are not practical. As I was saying, if I had a boy, into the government service he should go. A Civil servant is a respectable profession."

"I think of my brother George whenever the sea is mentioned," said my mother." He died at sea. In India. Lord preserve any boy of mine from that life. Now with music——" She left the sentence unfinished, as was her habit.

"A boy is a problem anyway you look at it," declared Aunt Alice. "Now it is easy to interest and amuse a girl. But a boy is hopeless, absolutely hopeless. They are everywhere where you do not want them to be. A boy is a problem."

"French," said my Uncle Allen smiling wisely, "he should learn French." He disregarded what the women had said, though he had given them ear. But that was the fashion. Women were allowed to say things, but their opinions were not taken seriously, women being judged incapable of reasoning.

"French is a help in any case," agreed my father, who spoke four languages with equal facility.

"The minister recommended Dr. Salisbury's school only the other day," observed my mother. "Now I have nothing to say, but——"

"Not for French," said my uncle. "We have decided upon Dr. Salisbury's for a start. But not for French. Nor for music. Just for thorough grounding in things, grammar and parsing and arithmetic. That's what Dr. Salisbury's is for."

"Bible history?" asked my aunt.

"They make religion a feature," my uncle assured the assembled company. "And Dr. Salisbury is excellent on general knowledge. The trend of the world. Movements. Soundly conservative too, Sir Henry was telling me the other day. But a Frenchman for French. A musician for music. Train——"

"Train up a child in the way he should go," said Aunt Alice brightly, quite as if she had expressed a strikingly original idea.

"What I was about to say was, train a boy to respect for authority," said my uncle. "Train him into reverential sentiment. Train him to know that a respectable minority must always govern the dissatisfied masses. You train girls to be womanly and to avoid brazen fronts. Look at the awful example of that Mrs. Annie Besant. Men must have strictly logical minds. Women must have personal attractiveness. Men must rule and learn to rule. Women must be submissive. This restlessness of the masses must be combated. The dangerous classes must be kept under. Democracy must be taught loyalty. The coming generation must know the besetting sin of mob rule. Train a boy to know these things and you have saved the country. Dr. Salisbury is the man. His very name is a recommendation. . . . Charlie, bring me the decanter. . . . No. Not the sherry, nor the port. The whiskey."

"What is it he calls his institution?" asked my mother, though the timid creature knew perfectly well.

"Academy for the Sons of Gentlemen, I think his school is called," answered my father, as he poured out the whiskey. He added, as he held the cut-glass decanter up to the light, "A good name, I think."

9

So it came about that I attended, in turn Dr. Salisbury's Academy, then after a year or so Dr. Willoughby's Preparatory School, and later after we had moved to Willesden, Mr. Harvey's Grammar School.

Though Dr. Salisbury said, in his prospectus, that he laid tremendous stress upon the importance of biblical history, he was given, in practice, to what he called "swift recapitulations" in which we skimmed lightly from the first chapter of Genesis to the story of the crossing of the Red Sea, but beyond that tragedy we never went. For me the history of the Israelites ended when they stood on the further shore, watching the engulfed Egyptians, while Miriam sang a song and accompanied herself on a tambourine. What most interested Dr. Salisbury was what he called "the onward march of events," or, in other words, the leisurely examination of the daily paper which he would read aloud and then comment upon for the edification of his pupils and assistant masters. "I cannot avoid an instructive commentary," he would say, in a spirit of exalted emotion, "for the incident is fraught with enormous possibilities." He was prideful in his eloquence concerning many things—the Zulu war, trade depression, Gladstone's ministry, the election of Mr. Garfield to the Presidency, an attempt to kill the czar, Bismarck, Mr. Parnell's activities in favor of Ireland, and he would wing his way to Demosthenian heights. "He who speaks sows, he who listens reaps," he would tell us, unmindful of the fact that our reaping was of chaff.

A man gifted with prophecy, too, was the learned doctor, though, like so many prophets who draw logical conclusions, unfolding events have proved him often wrong. "To what must this logically lead?" he would ask. "Mark my words," he would add impressively, regarding us as if searching for evidences of eternal thankfulness on our countenances, "Mark these, my words." Sounding that clarion note he launched himself on a sea of conclusions. He predicted that before fifty years had been numbered, man-propelled cycles would handle the world's transportation, and pictured omnibus cycles, cycle boats, society cyclists, family tricycles, bicycles de luxe for the aristocracy. He foretold an abandoned Australia, with all vegetation killed by rabbits, for, said he, "I have proved mathematically from unquestioned facts, and assistant masters will bear me out, that at the rate rabbits increase the whole continent must be overrun within twenty-five years." Then he turned to the blackboard and worked out an elaborate problem to prove his point. A fairer day would soon dawn for the world, he said, because by the time we reached manhood the tides would be harnessed and all work done without human hands, which struck us as a melancholy outlook. A refined and intelligent generation would come, he told us, as a result of widespread education; crime would disappear; prisons would close; there would be universal refinement of thought and speech and behavior, and human nature would lose its harshness. "Before thirty years," he announced, "education shall have marched around the world like a conquering god." No man, he told us, would dare to be a criminal when photography became common. Neither of the earth's poles would ever be discovered. Men would never fly in the air. Disease would be eradicated. There would be no wars because great and noble men would rule the world. So, as we listened we thought, if we thought about it at all, that we lived in a narrow age of imperfection, a luckless generation. Far ahead lay a glorious future and a golden age, and behind us also lay a kind of realm of rectitude when he and his contemporaries had been filled with the most pure passion for perfection. "Now, when *I* was a boy," he would say, and then fall to painting past glories; with youth given to intellectual excellence. Our age, as it seemed, had taken a wrong turn and had wandered into some dismal crypt in the course of the world's progress down the corridors of time.

Incidentally, commenting upon things read, the doctor furnished us with a mass of information that was highly inaccurate; as, that porcupines shoot their quills; that the function of the heart was to purify the blood; that the natives of Patagonia were giants; that coarseness in speech and writing before Shakespeare's day was universal; that all men had held the earth to be flat before Columbus sailed across the Atlantic;

that all Irishmen were witty; that man was developing a sixth sense; that the world's climate grew gradually milder; that an ostrich always buried its head in the sand on the approach of an enemy; that Nature abhorred a vacuum; that all things human marched to a steady improvement; that Darwin taught the descent of man from monkeys; that Newton worked out his theory of gravitation because an apple fell on his head; that Confucius advocated the worship of dead ancestors; that the Chinese were so literal minded that when a Chinese tailor was given a dirty, patched pair of pants as pattern for a new pair, he reproduced patches and grease spots so faithfully that old and new were as like as two pins; that the amount of information that a man possesses determines his success in life; that the human race steadily decreased in stature but increased in intellectual power as it read books and informed itself as to current events; that the deeper we peered into the past the more barbarous we discovered men to be.

Thus we imbibed truth, and thus Dr. Salisbury lured us to rectitude. I think that nine tenths of our school time was spent in non-essentials, and I'm not so sure that conditions have improved much since. Certainly in the majority of schools teachers and principals and superintendents still enjoy the easy flow of their own eloquence, and still regard themselves as centers of truth and light, clear-flowing fountains of wisdom. And still the young know how to flatter as courtiers flattered, to the moral confusion of the flattered. Did Dr. Salisbury indulge in the smallest speck of humor, so faint that he indicated it with the most fleeting of smiles, then how we roared with boisterous laughter at the sally be it never so obvious and commonplace, with the consequence that the good man went on with untroubled faith in his own felicitousness. Our flattery spread the net for his feet, indeed, and we lured him to unbend to the end that we might indulge in turbulent merriment as a relief from tedium.

What I learned in Dr. Salisbury's school I do not remember. He and his assistants were very long-winded in explaining the how and why of arithmetic, but they explained too much. They befogged things. Their game was mystery rather than elucidation, exactly as you find the game of the correspondence schools to-day to be mystery, the wrapping up of simplicities in layer after layer of factitious stuff. The great god Humbug has always been powerful. The "medicine man" has always flourished like a green bay tree. Mystery is the last fortress of a generation that has seen its day and is struggling desperately against the vigorous onslaught of young and clear-eyed knights who are determined to have the world for themselves. These young knights feel instinctively that all truth is simple and capable of lucid explanation. So I, like many others, paid no attention at all while labored expositions went forward, letting my mind wander freely whithersoever it willed in the domain of romantic imaginings. But, the lesson being ended, I would ask some older boy to show me how he did the problem, and in a few swift and homely words that cleared away fog like mountain air he would make everything clear. Less than two minutes were generally enough for a complete explanation when a boy focused things. And I have noticed that much the same process goes on in the case of my own children's scholastic education. They have learned best from minds pliant, candid, equitable, but pliancy and candor are not qualities ordinarily found in the mature mind.

I think that Dr. Willoughby of the Preparatory School grasped the fact that too great a gulf lay between the growing and the mature mind. That probably accounted for a sort of dry insolence in his instruction. "I shall," he told us often, "briefly explain in my own way. When I have finished, the boys of the seventh form will instruct the boys of the sixth. At the end of the week there will be a good caning for the boy who cannot work out a square root and the boy who has failed to show him the way of it." Then, having ended his technical discourse, during which he insisted upon quiet and order in the room, he would pair us off into what he called Ignoramuses and Thebans, sometimes assuring us that to teach others was a way to teach oneself. Victor, it turned out, would instruct me. As soon as the hum of industry commenced the doctor would take his chair by the fire and fall to reading, the picture of a man complacent and contented. But should he catch a boy misbehaving he would stand up and regard him with stern solemnity for a full minute. Emphatic indignation flashed from his eye. No matter how the detected stripling leaped into an attitude of devotion to duty and unconsciousness of offence, or assumed an air of healing penitence. No matter how his appearance denoted a mind filled with zest and enjoyment of scholastic duties. "Shaw," the doctor would cry, "I have a good mind to punish you," and would again compose himself to his book. An hour later, as though in the interim he had been occupied with arguments on the case and had overcome misgivings, he would close his book and say, "And I will, too, Shaw. Step to the front." So there would be a disagreeable incident, for Willoughby used his cane in steady and unflinching manner, and when he punished he did so with a certain energy and richness of spirit.

"Do you know why I call this a Preparatory School?" he asked more than once. "Parents imbued with the superstition of education think it means preparation for college, and I do not disabuse them. My idea of preparation is otherwise. It is to prepare you for the world. This school is not easy or pleasant. Neither is life. I play the slave driver sometimes and if I can get you into the habit of persevering industry then you will win. When I make one boy teach another we all win. You'll understand that later on. But you'll make no impossible demands upon me, and in life you'll be wise if you make no impossible demands upon masters and governors. Always every boy, certainly every man and every woman, tries to get through life giving as little as possible in return for what they get. The exceptions become the masters of men. There are no empty hours in this school, because boys, like men, are unfit for non-employment. You are all commonplace fellows. If any single one was not so, he would stand out like a mountain in a desert, not so much because of his eminence, but because of the flatness of the surrounding country."

Nor were there empty hours at Willoughby's except when Monsieur Roche, teacher of French, held his classes. You must see him as the mourner of lost causes kneeling before a shrine dedicated to grief. He bemoaned the fact that his father had taken an active part in 1830, when a duke of Orleans became king, for the Roches were on the wrong side and the family fortune vanished. He further bemoaned his own support of Napoleon III, by which he became an emigrant to England. And you must picture Monsieur Roche as a symphony in white and blue, except for his immaculate silk hat—a flowing blue tie and large white collar, a starched white waistcoat over which flowed a blue ribbon attached to his eye-glasses, a blue coat a shade darker than the necktie, white kid gloves, blue peg-top trousers, a turquois stick-pin, and patent-leather shoes with white buttons. I am sure that he hated his profession and hated his pupils. He indulged in ecstasies of pessimism, railing at the climate; berating English customs, buildings, manners. Often he told us, in French, for it was his merit that he always used the French in his communications, that the very food he had to eat took the light out of his day and the energy out of his work. When he found us noisily alive at his appearance in the classroom he became vehement. "Bah!" he would exclaim, "I fvould prefer to feed the fery porks in the field than teach such boys. . . . I fvould prefeaire to break the hard stone in the workhouse,"—which was severe, but we felt no sting of insult. Not a bit of it. Among ourselves, quite sincerely, we set down his dislike of us to the resentment at the brilliant exploit of Wellington at Waterloo, and therefore took his expression in the light of a tribute. Not by bewailing his own country's awful humiliation in that way could he shake the foundations of our national pride.

Like all teachers past and present, Monsieur Roche often indulged in personal reminiscence, and developed theories of religion and philosophy. It was no part of Ahn's *French Book* to set forth the doctrines of Auguste Comte, but he did so nevertheless, talking much about the serving of humanity and all that kind of thing, and his discourses were always in excellent French. So we gained much more than if we had sat close to Ahn, with his fictional aunts and gardeners and cousins so strangely given to irrevelant discourse, as when one asked, "Have you seen my cousin's cat?" and another replied, "No. But I have seen the boots of your aunt's gardener on the table." For that insulted our intelligence. Often, to avoid the aridities of Télémaque, or the drudgery of Paul Bluet's *French Composition* or the puerilities of Ahn we would put some question about French history, and always Monsieur Roche fell into the trap. Thus, while a genial light shown in the Frenchman's eye, we heard much about the Paris Commune, and how the column Vendome was overthrown, and how communists executed royalists and royalists communists. We went deeper into French history when he fell into the mood reminiscent and touched the political adventures of his father, going back to 1830, and Lafayette, and street barricades. Thinking that we were dodging a hateful task in pleasant fashion, we acquired much. That I had thus learned French without being aware of it came as a pleasant surprise later. Monsieur Roche, could he have known, would have been equally astonished.

CHAPTER III

The Very Stuff of Life

I

ALL those years I had been reading tremendously, voraciously. I adventured into a many-hued land of enchantment. I came to know every bookshop, new and second-hand, in the West End of London, as well as in other towns to which I frequently went. The day was barren on which I did not have a book in hand, and I read riding, walking in crowded streets, at mealtimes. Captain Marryat took me by storm and I read everything of his that I could lay hands on. Then Mayne Reid captured me, and upon what glorious crusade I entered when I came to know his sun-tanned, alkali-dusted scalp hunters. Incidentally hundreds of western tales by writers of lesser caliber delighted me, but I abandoned them when I found Bret Harte. In his characters I first made acquaintance with living, illumined human beings and with fictional folk that made distinct impressions: Jack Oakhurst with his sublime self-control, with his cool sanity, with his wide sympathies and his sense of humanity has stayed with me through life. Harte's poems were the first poems I read with understanding and interest, and, strangely, through them my horizon became widened for I came across his *Dickens in Camp* and so came to Dickens by way of *Oliver Twist.* Next came the *Pickwick Papers* which I read avidly and with shouts of laughter. The world of to-day has outgrown Dickens, we are told, and if that be true, all the worse for the world. I reveled in all those odd people whom I found to be far more interesting than the constrained folks of the real world; the inimitable Sam Weller who sent me into gales of merriment whenever he opened his mouth; Pecksniff, who, to this day, stands for me as a type of which the world is full; Peggotty whose double I know as a neighbor here in the Ozark Mountains; Ruth Pinch on whom I framed my feminine ideal; Mrs. Gamp who is, and was, and always must be in this world; Mercy Pecksniff, the empty-headed giggler, whose prototype I see whenever I walk on the campus at Fayetteville; all those strange creatures in *Martin Chuzzlewit* and in *American Notes* with their flamboyant boastings and their tawdry oratory and that reflex egotism called local patriotism; all those canting knaves and office-seekers, and those pinchbeck emotionalists, and those fellows ready with mouth-filling phrases.

Year after year, unguided, I passed through the pleasant land of books, glad to be unguided and unnoticed. There were literary gardens of much graciousness that I utterly missed: Jane Austen, Trollope; Shakespeare and his contemporaries, who came to me by strange ways later; Hawthorne, Washington Irving; almost all of the world of poetry; everything controversial and everything dogmatic and everything of religious savor. Of tales of chivalry I read *Ivanhoe* and *Quentin Durward*, but nothing else written by Walter Scott, except a book I chanced to come upon about witchcraft and demonology. Somehow that sent me to a work on popular delusions by Mackay, and, for a time, I turned to accounts of alchemists, especially Cagliostro and St. Germain which bubbled up many years later in the form of a book called *Romantic Rascals*. Poe's "M. S. Found in a Bottle" led me to *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym;* but how I came to the *Travels of Sir John Mandeville* I do not remember. And of course there was Thomas Hughes with his *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, and his *Tom Brown at Oxford*, after which I swept back to Dickens by way of *A Tale of Two Cities*, then *Sketches by Boz*—at this point I became full of the desire to write. If, I thought, I could see in a school reader the shortest of short stories of my own making, then the world would hold no greater joy. That has come to pass, and my boyish expectation of joy was no false hope. The thrill of pleasure turned out to be as keen as that thrill with which I received the Newbery medal, though kindly reviews, and the sight of my own picture in newspapers, and even the sight of the first of my books did not cause my pulse to beat faster for the least instant.

But to go on. Once at some house where we were guests I saw Sir George Otto Trevelyn and came to understand that he had written a *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*. It was the first author I had seen at close range, so I sought for a Macaulay book. *The History of England* being too large an undertaking, I compromised on *The Lays of Ancient Rome*. Someone has called Macaulay a "vigorous brass-band rhymer," but for me his lays were as voices of joy and health. I read and reread them with a kind of redundant happiness, learned, too, hundreds of the lines in a lighthearted way. Then, grieving that there should be no more of the same matchless stuff, and telling a companion of my grief, I came to know of *The Lady of the Lake* and found consolation. Of Thackeray I knew nothing but his murder story, *Catherine*, because I had read about the murderess Hayes in my *Newgate Calendar*. Charles Read and Wilkie Collins held only light charm. Kingsley's *Westward Ho!*, which I won as a prize at school for essay writing, lay on my book-shelf for two years untouched. But then I had wandered into unfamiliar fields, having picked up a trail that led a winding way. I came to it by way of Poe's "Pit and the Pendulum," and thereafter tales of terror occupied me, except for occasional variations, as when *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* and the coldly logical mind of Monsieur Dupin sent me to *Gaboriou*, and to Fergus Hume's *Mystery of a Hansom Cab*, with ramifications into Archibald Clavering Gunter who wrote about *Mr. Barnes of New York*, and *Mr. Potter of Texas*.

But those tales of terror! I read them in a state of mind very much like that which possessed Onomacritus when he made his forgeries in the house of Athene. You recall how he shivered in terror at the touch of Lasus's hand. So with hair on end I followed Frankenstein's monster into the world of northern ice; I took excursions with Beckford into the subterranean world of Vathek; I shuddered at all the weird paraphernalia in Walpole's *Castle of Otranto;* but of many dozens of books of similar hue I recall nothing but a general atmosphere of clanking chains, secret panels, skull-headed women, giant bats, rows of corpses buried upright, and ghastly figures shrouded in white draperies. Probably because such books lacked characterization and depended for interest solely upon incident they have passed out of mind exactly as so many moving pictures do, or as do popular songs. Some books which I read as relief from horror stay with me better, warm-hearted books crowded with odd characters and tricksy fooling, such as Lover's *Charles O'Malley, the Irish Dragoon*, and *Rory O'More* and *Tom Burke of Ours*, and *Jack Hinton.*

The attraction of the gloomy passed when I found Jules Verne in his happiest humor in his *Five Weeks in a Balloon*, and, on the heels of that, *Around the World in Eighty Days.* Skipping his historical and geographical soliloquies I went with him in a projectile around the moon, and under the sea in the *Nautilus*, and around the world with Captain Grant's children, and to the confines of space on a meteor, and to the North Pole with mad Captain Hatteras, and to the center of the earth with Otto Lindenbrock and Axel, and down the Amazon on a raft, and into Africa with Dick Sands the boy captain. What though the dramatis personæ re-occurred in book after book, the learned philosopher, the never-to-be-startled man of affairs and determination, the chivalrous and unselfish attendant, the illusion remained perfect and there was no time for criticism with all that fierce activity afoot, with all those ingenious devices, many of which since have materialized.

Meantime I did much incidental reading, going through a hundred or so more closely printed volumes in Routledge's Popular Library, in which I became acquainted with Fielding's *Tom Jones*, and *Joseph Andrews;* much of Sterne; of Cockton's novels about ventriloquists and sonnambulists; odd things usually taken as read and talked about, but very little known except in extracted passages, such as *Rasselas*, Haliburton's *Sam Slick*, Brockden Brown's *Wieland*, Warren's *Ten Thousand a Year*, Raspe's *Baron Munchausen.* I read everything I found written by Ballantyne, and by Henty, stories of tremendous adventure on plain and pampa, stories about coast-guard men, and fire-fighters, and lighthouse keepers, and fisheries. In some pirated edition I came across Mark Twain's *Innocents Abroad*, then for awhile it was Twain first and the rest nowhere, humor preferred. By Twain, somehow, I came to Max Addler's *Elbow Room* and *Out of the Hurly-Burly;* then Petroleum V. Nasby; then Artemus Ward; then Leland's *Hans Breitmann's Ballads.* I must have swallowed tons of roughage to get drams of nourishment. I must have gone over acres of paper seeing nothing worth seeing, not even getting amusement or moments of interest, for reading may be, and in many cases is, a mere habit and an idle waste of time. "Reading" may, as Bacon said, "make a full man," but a full man may be, and often is, a useless and dull man.

Looking for humor I came across the name Thoreau, in some reference made to "the man who lived in a bean patch so that he could think," which struck me as promising for laughter. So I started to read *Walden* and found it profitless and dull. I left him for a livelier companion, Rider Haggard who had created a rich and wonderful Africa of Zulus, and diamond mines, and hunters of untroubled faith. Yet my slight acquaintance with Thoreau had left something within me. There were thoughts that had to be followed to an end, clamorous thoughts and ideas. There had been hints of experiments. So I went back to *Walden* with the feeling that something important was to take place. There seemed to be an attractive stubbornness about the author, that and a note of sincerity as startling as the blast of a trumpet. For a long time I puzzled over this, "The cost of a thing is the amount of what I call life which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run." Also there was a disconcerting hint to the effect that most men gather together stuff to build a bridge to the moon but end by making a wood shed of the material. I seemed in my reading to have collected enormously, but to what end?

Thoreau's words haunted me! . . . Romance, forever painting an impossible world, insists upon dim forests and church towers and foliaged walls surrounding quiet sanctuaries, leisured surroundings, in a word, as the only suitable places for meditation and weighty thoughts. She discards the crowded street as incompatible with heavy seriousness, in spite of the fact that most men do their thinking to a thundering obbligato while hurrying from place to place, on foot, or in crowded trains, or in swift taxis; also in spite of the very great fact that the mind of man seems to have a trick of utterly disregarding environment, as anyone can testify who has found it impossible to avoid melancholy thoughts at his wedding, or a tendency to levity at a funeral, or sympathy with a criminal at an execution, or intense boredom at a social function. The mind of man rebounds indeed, almost in the fashion of a rubber ball, the higher according to the force with which it was directed, thus bringing to naught elaborately prepared effects, so that only rarely they awaken the emotions it was intended they should stir. Hence the phenomena of cowardly murderers going to their doom with a smile, and men of proven courage pale and trembling when on the verge of severe test on battle field or in dentist parlor, and business men at a get-together-for-the-good-of-the-community meeting weighing every proposition advanced for the commonweal in the narrow balance of self-interest, and a supreme artist such as De Pachmann interpreting his Chopin exquisitely but finding it impossible to refrain from clowning with his audience. At any rate, right or wrong, the rebounding-mind theory seems to me to explain why I have failed so often to bring myself into tune with surroundings in the way some say that they are brought. I have seen young women clasping a copy of the *Saturday Evening Post* to their bosoms when first seeing the Grand Cañon, the while they released their souls in ineffable "Ohs!" and "Ahs!" and "Superb!" and "Divine!" though my own mind remained a blank because of the sheer severity of the shock of what I saw. Another specific instance of that failure to become *en rapport* comes to mind as I recall with perfect distinctness how I fell into a serious discussion with myself when on my way to the Gaiety Theater to see Nelly Farren in one of her burlesques. From a romantic point of view insurmountable difficulties stood in the way of philosophic meditation. Above, beneath, around and within me, everything should have made for the enjoyment of the moment, the very plenitude of existence. There lay the Strand, a complex of rumblings and creakings and shoutings; an exciting thorough-fare with its hansom cabs, its omnibuses, its costers pushing their loaded wheelbarrows, its newsboys shouting "'Orrible murder! All about the 'orrible murder!" its silk-hatted and white-bosomed theater-goers, its sandwich men carrying boards advertising a new beverage, its street women in flaunting feather hats, its flower girls with their baskets. Looking back the vision grows in extent and clearness so that I recall a spire to the eastward belonging to a church that stood like an island between two streams of traffic. On the corner at my left was a building where periodicals called *The Field* and *The Queen* were published, and a long narrow sign that ran round the house notified the world of the fact. Other signs stood out like bristles on every house, announcing guns, offices for rent, collars, but most prominently Wines and Beers and Spirits. A little way ahead, and to the left of the church, a cleft marked Holywell Street, a place of tremendous interest because of its bookshops, and second-hand dealers, and merchants whose businesses had an appearance of mystery but who displayed in their shop windows contraceptive devices as advocated by Mrs. Annie Besant and Charles Bradlaugh, also pamphlets on Malthusianism of a sort to set any American bookstore on fire. To the right of the island-like church was the gloomy gray building where I went to learn the secrets required to be known by whosoever desired to become a Civil servant. There, lately, I had attended, a student shining dully in English composition, twinkling fairly steadily in geography, flickering in mathematics, but opaque in what were called "commercial studies," that is, bookkeeping and accountancy, in which I found it almost impossible to separate the sheep of assets from the goats of liabilities. To exacerbate matters I had fed from Thoreau's hand and the food was as poison to a mind trying to assimilate commercial knowledge. For what better evidence of a poisoned system than that the patient should sit in a classroom with intent to play a game of phantom business, stock-taking with imaginary goods, trying to discover whether he stood in the rôle of bankrupt or one driving a roaring trade, the while there ran through the mind this: "The way to money-making leads directly downwards." Or this, "Trade curses everything it handles." Or, "A simple and independent mind does not toil at the bidding of any prince." Or, "What a man thinks of himself, that it is which determines, or rather indicates, his fate."

As to the last quotation: about myself I thought a great deal, but of myself I thought very little. For Thoreau had gripped me, and squeezed me dry of much, just as a hand squeezes and empties a sponge. But I had not been left empty. Rather I had been dipped in a new solution. So I walked the Strand, bound for a show which Thoreau would have scorned to think about for a single moment, and my mood not so much vaguely sad as contemplative and in minor key. I had taken stock of myself carefully, with the result that I stood convicted of melancholy bankruptcy in spite of all those years of what I had been told were assets. It was not that any darkly sad spirit rested upon me, but rather that I felt as one who, having reached a point on a desired horizon, found himself unprepared for the journey that lay ahead. So, as I sat in my theater seat watching Nelly Farren cut her capers, I was being borne on and on by an overpowering current. I watched the pageantry, heard the music, enjoyed the lights and the color and the pleasant company, much as a seaman finds interest in looking at froth and ripple and surface whirling of the waters, the while a Gulf Stream sweeps him onward to unseen shores. I knew myself, rather than condemned myself, as one confined within invisible barriers and strictly limited, afraid to work because I dared not go beyond routine respectability. My training had been to the end that I might attain temporary advantage and nothing more, while in Thoreau I seemed to see a rare creature who rose to tremendous heights. He had said things that went deep, things so true as almost to seem platitudinous after one thought about them a little, things that I myself had thought but feared to say. And, because of that fear in me, I was shabby and fustian inwardly, though outwardly all that a lad should be in the world respectable. The whole trend of my schooling had been to stifle thought. My learning had been a mere parrot chattering and a quoting of books, of teachers, of men long since dead; and quoting struck me as the very essence of futility and stupidity.

When I came to think of it, the banal thing that the comedian on the stage was singing—

> *"All of you come along with me.*
> *I'm for a fair, old, rare, old spree.*
> *Everybody here's invited;*
> *Join me and I'll see you righted.*
> *O come along, you must be dry;*
> *Hi-tiddley, hi-ti-hi-hi-hi!*
> *O, come along and wet your eye*
> *For I'm—all—Right"*—

seemed to be a finer thing than the quoted opinions of others, finer because it was the expression of a man not afraid to be frankly silly, and there was room in the world for silliness and sentimentality and everything else. The maker of the silly song had a purpose, the purpose to make people laugh, and he fulfilled it admirably, therefore the world testified its approval in gold and silver, freely and liberally. But I and others who went in for nothing more than mere psittacisms were purposeless, were echoes. In a word, I was nothing because opinionless, a bundle of baseless prejudices. That which people called me was a thin veneer. . . . So I thought and thought, unaware of the fact that I was thinking. And I wondered and puzzled, and shrank from the wrath I conjured up against myself. Shrank and stood self-condemned as one who could row a boat all day without tiring, could wrestle and box, had taken second place in a ten-mile cross-country run, had gripped ninety-seven pounds with either hand under test at the Galton Anthropometric Laboratory, but had never earned a crust of bread or a pair of socks. So all that strength of limb seemed shameful rather than something of which to be proud. So useless was I that had I been picked up by the scruff of the neck and dropped into a new place I must have starved. I could not have picked up potatoes for my sustenance because I did not know what a potato plant looked like.

But away went ruminations when the electric Nelly Farren caught the attention of the theater with one of those topical songs cleverly arranged to set people of opposing political belief to good-natured rivalry in applauding, she and the comedian singing alternately:

"Mister Gladstone's a Grand Old Man and that you can't deny,
Oh, what a happy land is England.
But if there's a muddle he's certain to have a finger in the pie.
Oh, what a happy land is England."

Then with a rush and a bang the orchestra headed into the chorus, and we all exploded with:

"Rule, rule Britannia—God save the Queen.
Hard times in England are very seldom seen.
Hokey, pokey penny a lump and taste before you buy.
Oh, what a happy land is England."

So enthusiastic did a middle-aged man in evening dress who was seated on my right become, that almost I feared he would burst a blood vessel in his excitement. For Nelly had the whole house at her chariot wheels, and when the curtain fell thunderous roars brought her to the front again and again. So my mood of self-analysis came to an end for I roared with the rest, and after that became lost in blissful illusion. Again and again the clever little entertainer made the house sing while she conducted, she leaning far over the footlights and making us, with the skill of an executive, work together. She stimulated and she controlled. She governed as a Cortes did, or as Napoleon. She was like a young priestess who could stir people to madness.

Outside the theater who should I run up against but the son of the Honorable Stephen and his friend, Cecil Rountree, and nothing would do but that we must spend the tail end of the night seeing how the poor took their pleasures. So we drove down to the edge of Whitechapel in a hansom cab then went to work exploring dismal streets, imagining ourselves to be young Haroun al-Raschids, not enjoying ourselves so much as pretending to. Gas-lit public houses, pawn shops, long lines of costers' barrows by the curb, each of them with its shouting man and flaring naphtha lamp; a jangle of laughter, calling, bawling, singing, whistling; butcher shops with men auctioning meats, lodging houses teeming with people, the noise of a thousand wheels; public houses again, street musicians, market wagons with ponderous loads; a seething, pushing, arguing crowd. All of that and more we saw. We looked at the outside of a Salvation Army shelter and talked about visiting it dressed in old clothes; planned to spend a night there for experience sake. We went into a noisy public house and drank ginger ale, but were joined by a trio of ragged and greasy professional loafers who invited us to buy beer for them, which we did, not so much from hospitality as from fear. We ventured into a fried fish shop, a place reeking with the smell of cooking grease, and sat on rough benches and ate excellently cooked fish which was put on a dirty plate by a dirty man in dirty shirt and dirty apron, while other patrons elbowed us, some by accident, some in rough horseplay. In the street we watched boys and girls dancing to the music of a street organ and when one of the girls took Cecil by the arm and pulled him into the dance he acted as though to the manner born. Then we saw a street fight between two women, which was stopped by a policeman, but began wholly afresh when he turned his back. We saw a drunken woman strapped to a stretcher and carried off on the shoulders of two policemen who were followed by a crowd, while the arrested woman by turns wept, or called out "Thank God I've lived to see my own funeral." Once, as we passed the mouth of a dark alley a small boy came running out, shouting loud contempt for his pursuer as he dodged about us, using us as bodyguard; and the man who pursued was an ugly customer, with an open clasp knife in his hand, who blasphemed the whole human race in an awe-inspiring way. And the smell of the neighborhood was a compound of human sweat, smoking tobacco, soot, horse dung, cooking, fish, beer and mustiness. At barrows, lit by naphtha lights, people ate oysters, pig's head, whelks, an ugly compound called pease-pudding and faggots, jam-puddings, pies, sweet stuff made by hand in plain sight, thick slices of bread and butter. A street preacher preached in voice of thunder, heedless of jeers. Young couples sang as they walked. Some played concertinas, others whistles, still others jew's-harps and mouth organs. Children romped about on pavement and roadway although the hour neared midnight, some of them playing "being drunk." At least three times we were solicited by luckless women of the street. Then, as we began to tire of our experiment, we came upon a penny-gaff, the theater of the slums, the degenerate survivor of the old-time mystery play.

The theater building was a disused warehouse, the outside of it lit by flaring naphtha lamps, and at the doorway an announcer, something the worse or better for liquor, mounted on a table, told of the play in disjointed talk. Expletives relating to copulation and sanguinity were plentiful in his discourse but his hearers seemed habituated to them. His insults amused them. "Don't," he told them, "stand there with your mouths open like a row of——" and went on drawing comparisons of a cloacal nature. "This 'ere's the drammer," he said. "The bloody drammer as good as ole Shakespeare's, but lots more excitin'. This 'ere what I got on is the costoom of a Roman warrior, but the bleedin' play's about Ned Kelly, the I'an Clad bushranger of Australia, and, so 'elp me Gawd, Kelly wore Roman armor. . . ."

Now the Roman armor to which he referred consisted of trunks, a tin helmet, a dented breastplate and an indubitable Scotch kilt, but no one had an eye for anachronisms, or if they did they kept silence, the more because the announcer revealed an intense dislike for criticism. "So 'elp me Gawd, I'll bash the bloody bullocks out of anyone who comes in to upset the bloomin' show, I will," he said, at some interruption. "You ain't got no music," was what the interrupter had said.

Inside, the bare hall was lighted by oil lamps. At one end stood a bare stage, curtainless, without proscenium. As in Shakespeare's day the scene was indicated by a written notice announcing, "This is the Australian bush." "This is a bank." "This is a hotel." But after we had paid our admission money and before the play commenced, Ned Kelly, who turned out to be the man in Roman armor, made a lurid speech in which he told us that the pianist was drunk, wherefore the show would have to go on without music, and there was a faint suggestion of threatened resentment should any, on that account, demand their money back. "Him and the man who's the soldier in the show, they both 'ad a drop too much. If any lady or gentleman'd like to step up and do the soldier, or if anyone knows how to play the pianner 'ere's the chance. We'll give 'em back their entrance money. If there ain't, then the bloody show'll go on without music and you 'ave got to bloody well imagine the soldier. And if you don't like it you can lump it."

Now, hearing that, what did Cecil Rountree do in spirit of mischief but get to his feet, and, as one in sterling simplicity of heart, publicly tell Ned Kelly that I was a music-hall pianist by profession who would gladly furnish music for the entertainment, and that the son of the Honorable Stephen's profession happened to be that of actor, and that both of us had persuaded him to announce us as ready to offer our services. Nor, as we saw, would it avail either of us to refuse, or to deny Cecil's claim. Indeed there came pressure. We were applauded. We were gently urged by pressing hands. A florid lady of mature age, who was dressed in spangled skirt to represent Ned Kelly's sweetheart, came down into the auditorium and took my arm. Ned Kelly himself took charge of Stephen. So, recognizing the practical difficulties that lay in the way of refusal, we went to our dooms. The son of the Honorable found himself harnessed in warlike gear, and the florid lady led me to a piano and told me to play. "Anything'll do," she told me. "Work in weepy stuff in all the death scenes and come down like a thousand of bricks in all the fights."

So to it we went furiously, and the play proceeded. Ned Kelly, it transpired, was a good-hearted young gentleman desirous of peace and quiet in the Australian bush, who loved "a maiden fair," personated by the florid woman in spangles. But the maiden, it turned out, had been betrothed by the duke, Ned's father, to Ned's younger brother. Ned, in trunks and kilt, the costume suited to an Australian sheep-farmer, conducted himself very decently, surrendering all claim to the family estate, but clinging to the girl. But the brother upset Ned's domestic arrangements by denouncing Ned as a thief at the utmost pitch and power of his voice, and in the hearing of an officer of the law, who was Stephen. And as, according to Australian law as interpreted by the dramatist, any officer combined in his person judge and jury, Stephen attempted to make an arrest, whereupon Ned, infuriated beyond measure at the injustice of things, drew his sword and made a pass at the policeman in self-defence; then there ensued a duel with swords, in the course of which the treacherous brother attacked Ned in the rear. But for the bravery of the woman in muslin and spangles it would have fared ill with Ned. For she, in the nick of time, discharged a pistol shot at the unworthy brother, who fell. Then all knelt and wept to slow and soft music, while Ned painted a word picture of two brothers kneeling at a mother's knee. The affecting scene being ended in doubt as to whether the stricken man lay wounded or dead, the policeman produced handcuffs and ordered Ned to surrender himself to justice. But Ned's heart of fire would brook nothing of the kind. "Better the free life of a bushranger than stone walls," he declared, whereupon the lady in spangled muslin, overcome with emotion, fell fainting to the floor. Gallantly enough, the policeman helped Ned to lift her senseless form to the sofa, whereupon Ned, stepping for a moment out of his rôle and sacrificing the drama to humor, observed to the policeman and audience, "The bloody swine gets heavier every time she faints," and the impromptu effect of the self-stultification was so overwhelming that a roar of applause went up. The remainder of the play occupied itself with flight and pursuit, capture and escape, challenge and defiance, the law always stupid and blundering, the outlaw generous and magnanimous. Not until the lady in muslin and spangles fell captive by treachery and Ned succumbed to the temptation of attempting her rescue did he fall into the toils. But once a prisoner we did the thing properly. The closing scene showed Ned on the gallows, a rope about his neck, the hangman ready to pull, the condemned man dying bravely in kilt and tin helmet eloquent to the last about holy right and bitter wrong. So it was a Morality if ever was one, a Morality in no point different from the Moralities of the Middle Ages, in no way different from the common moving pictures of our own day with their infantile construction, their grotesquery, their distortions and horse play and elementary fun, their triviality and uncouthness.

"You look like bloody toffs," said Ned Kelly at the end of the performance. "If you want a job piano playin' say tne word. Gawd blime, you both done good. Best bloomin' show this week. We're goin' to change it to *Dick Turpin* next week. . . . Same play with a different name." Then followed persuasions. Ned Kelly had faith in us, and said so, spiritedly and generously. He was frankly grateful too. He let that be known distinctly and clearly, expressing himself in fantastic profanity. His gratification necessitated expletives with a parenthetical admixture of fateful prophecy having to do with divine redemption. There was rich ornamentation largely eschatological. Then he called upon his God to terminate the existence of his soul if he failed to translate his satisfaction into terms of hard cash, and there upon opened the theater treasury and paid us half a crown apiece. And I became filled with curious radiance and happiness, having thus earned money for the first time. A lively inspiration caused both of us to refuse it but Ned Kelly would have none of that. "You keep it," he said. "If I took it," he said. "If I took it, I'd be a bleedin' beggar, wouldn't I? What ho! You got to pay for what you get. You earned it and it's yourn." After that, to refuse would have been affectation and vanity.

2

Quite without preliminaries, it transpired that I was to take a little tour by way of Belgium to Germany where my father had kinfolk, some in Switzerland, some in Frankfort-on-the-Main. While preparations were going forward it came to me with something of a shock that I knew nothing of my ancestry, except that the maternal side of the house was Irish, the paternal of Swiss extraction. There had been references, not at all of a lucid kind, to a certain Godfrey, once chapel master to James II. There had been other references to Irish estates all ruined to hopelessness, but such matters did not concern me or interest me, so, to this day, God only knows my ancestry of any remoteness. What came out very clearly was that the relatives in Frankfort were retainers of some sort of the Rothschilds, and in the Rothschild residence at Frankfort I would stay, the more to my benefit because a shadowy someone named

Soeltzer would have an eye on my music. So to Rotterdam and to Amsterdam and to Antwerp I went, nor found anything of interest except in Antwerp. There, waking one morning, I saw through the bedroom window what I had not expected to see, for I arrived at midnight. It was the cathedral tower, a lacework of stone. The beauty of it took my breath. Never before had I been struck with the magnificence of architecture. The glow of a rose-colored dawn touched it, softening the outline, and the wonder and glory of the sight brought a lump into my throat. Afterwards I tried to experience that moment of exaltation again but could not recapture it. I attempted to argue myself into the belief that I enjoyed it, but in vain, even though I made journeys so as to catch sight of the tower unexpectedly, looking through streets or narrow alleys.

But the irregular crooked streets and lanes gave me thrills of pleasure which I have felt elsewhere, as when walking the narrow and crooked streets of Boston, in quaint Quebec, in New Orleans in the old French quarter, in Ysleta, in the older part of Cuidad Cuarez. The life of Antwerp, too, excited me: the milk carts drawn by dogs, the market stalls in the open place before the guild houses, the promenaders on the terrace, the shipping on the Scheldt, the flower market, the crowds who listened on the Place Verte when some master conducted the playing of the chimes, the women who knelt at shrines, the ecclesiastics in robes, the strange accommodations for men which are used in full view of the world. There seemed to be a delicate coloring about Antwerp which I had never thought of in connection with a city. London impressed me as gray, Brighton as red and blue. Antwerp had a shimmering delicacy about it. And its smell for me is the perfume of flowers mingled with the pleasant odor of roasting coffee beans, for that is what assailed me one day when I stood on the cathedral tower looking down into the square. An old verger accompanied me there and told many legends about Matsys, and about the bones of a giant, which I have forgotten. But one tale he told stuck with me. It was about a fiend called Vapper, as far as I could gather, a sort of *spottgeist* or *rubezahl.* Years after, in the Argentine, I heard a tale very similar told by an old plainswoman and I used it under the title of "El Enano," in one of my books, *Tales from Silver Lands*. Folk tales are much the same the world over because the mind of man is the same the world over. A golden age, and innocence and perfection; rapid action and combat; allegories concerning revenge, bravery, dread and the like; a dash of chivalry; an exaggerated picture of criminal propensities and an exaggerated representation of goodness: these are the ingredients to which must be added a something suggestive of the idea that the world is not ruled by brute force and that there is an upward aspiration.

3

In Germany I learned to smoke, to play billiards and to fence. I also fell in mild love with a girl because she wore a pleated skirt of blue and white, had a flashing smile and pretty teeth and played the piano very well indeed. We conversed in French and a sort of placid happiness filled me when we walked about the Palmengarten, or sat by the river, or rode up and down Der Zeil Strasse. She was a distant cousin. But the interest I felt in her vanished without leaving a trace when we parted. And the parting came on the heels of a letter received from home, hinting that things financial were not going at all well and that drastic retrenchment was in the air. I gathered that my father contemplated going to Illinois, where his father had been for many years, and the news astonished me because I had not once thought of a grandfather. The family tree seemed to be a sprawling one and rather like a banyan, striking roots where branches touch earth. My grandfather, I learned later, had founded a second family during or immediately following the Civil War.

Affairs, when I returned, did not seem to me so terribly bad. Everyone had good health. The table was generous as ever. We entertained in lively manner as usual. What everyone most feared was the future, and that did not worry me at all, for healthy youth knows nothing but an eternity of youth and strength. At home we met, sat at the same fireside, talked about things indifferently, but my father never mentioned financial matters. Nor did I mention the leaven that worked within me, the Thoreau influence. But I had made my secret decision. I would work and I would live simply, and that decision grew stronger after my father went to New York and wrote back that he intended to stay there and presently import the family. I did not wish to be imported. The trouble that sat upon me was a wonder how and where one made themselves part of the machinery of the world. By what cranny did one creep in? To be sure my uncle had spoken of the possibility of attaining much by influence, but influence I did not want, would not accept, would not even consider, held indeed in scorn. Then one day my sky cleared by the strangest chance.

4

On a bleak December day I stood at a second-hand bookshop close to Paddington Station, sheltering myself from a sudden sleet storm. A loaded dray drawn by two heavy horses caught my attention as it turned to go down an inclined way to the place where deliveries of freight for the railroad were made. The driver, a lusty man well bundled-up in coats, seemed very masterful with his horses, which were inclined to slip on the stones, and, interested, I walked across the road to see how matters went. I watched him turn and back his team into position so that the tail end of the dray touched the wall at the delivery window. He swore somewhat at the clerks within for their slowness, not snarling oaths like those of Ned Kelly of the penny-gaff, but weighty and emphatic ones of a sort favored by draymen and sailors and those who direct laborers. His words warned rather than denounced, and it became clear that he moved in an atmosphere of authority. The clerks hustled and the boy on the dray moved with fine action. So I went nearer to see the flinging out of boxes and baskets and hampers from the dray to the iron-covered counter, admiring the agility with which things were done when the driver enlivened matters. Once he slanged the waybill clerk for slowness, saying that horses could not wait in the cold for loafers, then, everything going to his satisfaction, he went to his horses and fell to rubbing his beard-bristled chin against their velvet noses, talking to them softly the while. And I recognized Bill the knife-boy of Curzon Street whom I had not seen for years.

It is needless to write the words of greeting, and of mutual surprise, and of explanation. Enough to say that the moment was one of cordiality, but, as of old, with Bill the masterful one of us, the basis our old one of companionship. In spite of the years that had passed no gulf yawned between us, for Bill had always been Bill, and I had always been I, neither of us having any fictitional character to live up to, or down to. And all went so well and comfortable that when the dray's contents had been unloaded and the waybills signed, I mounted to the seat beside Bill and rode with him through crowded streets, wondering because he did things so well in the midst of congested traffic. So we came to the stable where the team was housed, and after Bill had left me to see to the comfort of his horses, we found a public house where we drank to one another's health, sketched our histories and recalled by-gone incidents. When conversation had come to an end of its first burst Bill shot out, "What are you doing for a living, young shaver?" and I answered, "Nothing!" cheerfully as I could. I added, "But I'm on the lookout for something."

Bill considered that for a little while, then told me that he had "done for himself since he first began," at which I felt hearty respect. "I always had an idea, back there in Curzon Street, that you people did too little and ate too much. You gorged like pigs. You drank like fish." He went on, with curious detail, to relate incidents to support his view, but without disapproval. When he had done, then nothing would suffice but that I should go to his lodgings and take a meal with him.

Bill's home was the outer tegument of Bill, fitting him as comfortably as his skin. The room, an upper one, overlooked a canal, and the house stood in a street that ran off from Harrow Road, residences on one side, canal wharves along the other, so, sitting at the window, Bill could see boats and barges, "and hear the men swear at each other," he said. His household furniture he had made with his own hands. The table was hinged to the wall by the window and could be let down when not in use, so as to be out of the way. His bed looked like a ship's bunk when extended, but it, too, could be folded and turned into a sort of locker seat by an arrangement of hinges. Almost in the manner of a magician he explained and worked, folding the bunk longitudonally like a book, then turning down the legs, next dropping a lid that depended from the wall, and, lo! and behold, the bed became a seat that concealed mattress and bed gear. Three small lockers held his estate, one the cooking and table utensils, another his wardrobe, the third his library and general effects. So, with everything stowed away, Bill had space in his room of six paces long and four wide to do morning exercises with dumb-bells and wand. A limited overhead made Indian clubs impossible.

Clumsily enough I observed that floors, windows and walls were clean as work could make them, at which the glint of the old swift anger came into his eyes. "Why shouldn't they be clean?" he asked, then he added: "That's how it used to be in Curzon Street. Someone'd come down from upstairs and say 'How clean!' as if dirt was to be expected. Used to make me angry. There was your uncle. Bad habits. No end. A devil of a mess his inside must have been in, what with all that wine and whiskey and beer. And the everlasting guzzling at dinner, with ten o'clock suppers. I've often thought about the state of his interior. But outside, well, he looked as if he'd just stepped out of a bandbox. Often I've taken his boots to him and felt like hitting him over his bald head with them when he'd say 'How clean,' as if I couldn't take any pride in my work. And him, mind you, belching and blowing and breaking wind when he thought nobody heard."

"I didn't mean that," I said.

"Oh, I know. Anyway it's no trouble to keep all clean and tidy if you cut things down to what you need."

"Simplicity's the main thing, Bill. That's what I'm after. Honestly. Thoreau says——"

"That's the idea," said Bill, brushing Thoreau aside. "I don't propose to turn money into things that clutter about a fellow."

Like a warrior proud of his banner, I returned to the attack.

“Thoreau says that the cost of a thing is the amount of life exchanged for it.” [illegible]

“I've read a [illegible]” [illegible]

[illegible]

“That's because [illegible]” [illegible]

[illegible]

Figg looking very much like Oliver Goldsmith in doubtful mood; Cribb defeating Molineaux in a ring uncomfortably crowded with nonchalant gentlemen: John Morrisey in a silk hat; John C. Heenan smiling; Jem Mace with folded arms displaying a belt round his middle; John L. Sullivan fierce as to mustache; one Daniel Mendoza who seemed to be defying the lightning, for he was sparring with no opponent and no onlookers, in a terrific thunderstorm. Another wall seemed to be devoted to things maritime: yachts and schooners and ships in full sail; sea-scapes; deck-scenes; fishing smacks; cruising privateers and Moorish caravels and galleons and galleys. A fourth wall held portraits: Charles Peace the burglar, Lord Wolseley the commander-in-chief of the army, Mr. Gladstone, Charles Bradlaugh, Queen Victoria, several stage ladies, Mary Blandy hanging by the neck from a beam thrust between the branches of two trees in the presence of an unconcerned crowd. In a gilt frame was Dick Turpin on Black Bess. That was balanced by a second framed picture, Mary Penny, very distinguished in feathered hat and fur cape.

Bill, stripped to the waist, was washing himself in ice-cold water, talking the while. ". . . the pictures," I heard him say, "go to show how a fellow will come to like the things he does." He dipped his head in the bucket and then stood upright, the water showering from his yellow hair. "After they kicked me out of Curzon Street for lending you bad books—*Claude Duval* and all that——"

"Why, I didn't know that," I exclaimed, and felt miserably guilty.

"It doesn't matter, shaver. Anyway, after that I went with some fellows who gave shows and fairs. A boxing show. You know the sort. They shoved me up on a platform and challenged anyone to box me, my weight. That's how I came to be interested in that sort of thing. It came in useful though. I got this medal."

He displayed a little bronze Maltese cross.

"Where? Who gave it?" I asked.

"Polly," he explained simultaneously with my question, then went on, while I wondered at the strange feminine taste.

"I worked on Thames barges after that. That's how I got interested in ships. I moved about a good deal. Once I started up as a barber down at the docks. Don't want much of a plant for that. Two chairs. Roller towel. Razor. Basin. Pennyworth of soap. Then the horses. They got me. Best creatures in the world. They kind of keep you clean. . . . You know. . . . Horses and the great Polly. . . . That's how I came to have the lockers. When I move I fill them. All my stuff goes into them. Put them on a barrow and there I am."

Hearing that I became a mixture of admiration and regret. I did not like to hear about the woman. But he mounted high in my estimation because of his Thoreau-like contempt for material possessions; then he fell lower in my estimation when he added, "But never fear. I'll have things some day. Books. And I'd like to collect coins, old coins and foreign coins. I'd like to go to America and take up a piece of land. Horses. I'd like to own a few horses. . . . I've saved a little. Twenty pounds odd I've got."

He produced a small box and showed me its contents in proof. "Some day I'll see the world, but not like a tramp. It's all nonsense, pretending to see things without money. You simply can't. It's this way. If a tramp came here, to this city, what would he see, I ask you? Not much even of the outside of things. Could a shabby-looking fellow get into the tower of London? The first guard'd stop him. Would he be able to pay sixpence to get into this or that? No. He'd spend it on something to eat. I looked at a sort of panorama of Niagara and asked myself how much a fellow on his uppers would get to see. The falls, maybe, and that's all. It would take two days' walk to see everything that's free, and money to see much."

While he talked, having finished his toilet, he busied himself preparing a meal, for his pride forbade the acceptance of my invitation to eat at a coffee house. Also he wanted to show me. "You people in Curzon Street couldn't do anything at all," he told me. "Useless, you were. Couldn't cook, clean your own boots, brush your own clothes, light a fire—couldn't do anything except guzzle and talk, talk and guzzle. Mind you, I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings, but you know what I mean." I got the idea that he was critical without trying to impose his prejudices.

He griddled a steak, cut thick, with a promising rind of rich, yellow fat. He toasted bread, balancing the fork cleverly on an arrangement of chair, poker and large book. He made coffee, and all on a narrow open fireplace. Presently the air became thick with a composition of odors, for we smoked while cooking progressed, and the lamp chimney smoked too; but presently the air cleared, the fire glowed, the lamp came to understand that it played an important part and burned brightly. So we wrought and arranged the hinged table at the window and looked out at the street lamps while we ate and talked. The very fact that we had but one knife and fork and therefore had to take turn and turn about added to the zest of things, so I was glad and grateful to be there and said so.

"You know I've often thought that a whole lot of people are like them hermits you read about. They live shut in cells," was what Bill said in reply. "Now a family could be a pretty jolly kind of arrangement when you come to think of it. But is it? No. Too dignified. That's the trouble. Father dignified. Mother dignified. Kids dignified. Parents wanting to be respected. I'd rather be with my horses than with some families I've seen. With animals you get ideas. With people you don't. With animals you've got duties. With people you've got what they call rights. There's a big difference. People's rights've got a way of looking like my wrongs somehow. Duties don't look that way."

5

Bill's hospitality could not end with eating. Saturday was his night out and he wanted to share the joy with me. "Theater, or what?" I asked.

"Polly," he replied.

"A friend?" I asked, foreseeing an uninteresting experience, but not pressing the matter because of a paroxysm of cowardice. I added that girls were not very much in my line, and Bill grinned. Then, it seemed unchivalrous to pursue the matter further, but a mood of solemnity came over me. I found that

I did not admire Bill quite so much. Something had gone out of the emotional fervor. In me was a moralized emotion that exalted celibacy. But I picked up in the street, noting that my companion walked with a stride. Comfortably dressed, lively of eye, square-shouldered and deep of chest, a general air of fearlessness pervaded him; that and a cheerful assurance. Transferred to this day and place he might have been taken for a mechanic in comfortable circumstances, or an athlete, or a chauffeur, or a geologist.

We caught an omnibus on the run, clamored up its three steps, found the top almost empty so made our way to the front and slipped down beside the driver to find the tarpaulin cover pleasant in the biting wind. Except for the slightest of nods the driver did not notice us until we neared the Royal Oak. There Bill observed, to no one in particular, indicating the horses with a jerk of his head, that the off-side mare was as fine a creature as he ever clapped eyes on, which remark broke down the dignified silence of the driver. "These Londoners," he said, "don't know a mare from a horse. They don't know a stallion from a gelding . . ." and thereafter the freemasonry of horsemanship held them companions. Only once did Bill address me and that was at the Marble Arch, when the conductor climbed along the top and leaned over to give the driver money, the division of the spoils for that journey. Then Bill said to me, with fine delicacy, "Don't mind me not talkin'. We've got all night. He likes horses, so do I, and not many can talk to him." But I was glad enough to see Bill happy, and nothing but the prospect of a night at Polly's overshadowed my spirit. I pestered myself with plans to get away from the company, or house, or room or whatever it should turn out to be. It was difficult to formulate plans when one had no experience in that sort of business.

Suddenly the sky cleared. Bill stood absolved of moral laxity. For we got off the bus, walked up Regent Street and Polly turned out to be an institution instead of a female. It was the Polytechnic. My joyful discovery found words.

Bill grinned.

"Shaver, that's just it. All the jolly crowd of you pretended so hard that you always thought others had things to hide Always patting yourselves on the back for your own superiority you were, every man jack of you. You thought policemen were made for the kitchen and parsons for the parlor, if you know what I mean . . . Well, let it go."

We went through swinging doors into a hallway crowded with young men and lads of my own age, standing and talking. There were some preliminaries in the way of credentials and introduction, after which we passed through a turnstile, then went up a few steps, taking them three at a time, Bill doing much handshaking and greeting and nodding in the hall, on the steps and beyond. Entering a hall at the head of the steps I had a curious, vague memory of having been there before, at the sight of geological relief maps on the walls. Next I remembered having visited the place with my mother, when very young, at which time it had been a kind of scientific exhibition with a diving bell at work in an artificial pool, and glass spinners, and much ingenious apparatus designed to create optical illusions. I had seen a rudimentary phonograph there, I remembered, a coffee-mill looking machine into which a man shouted "Hallo!" then reversed the winding process so that a ghostly "Hallo!" might be imagined as a tinny echo.

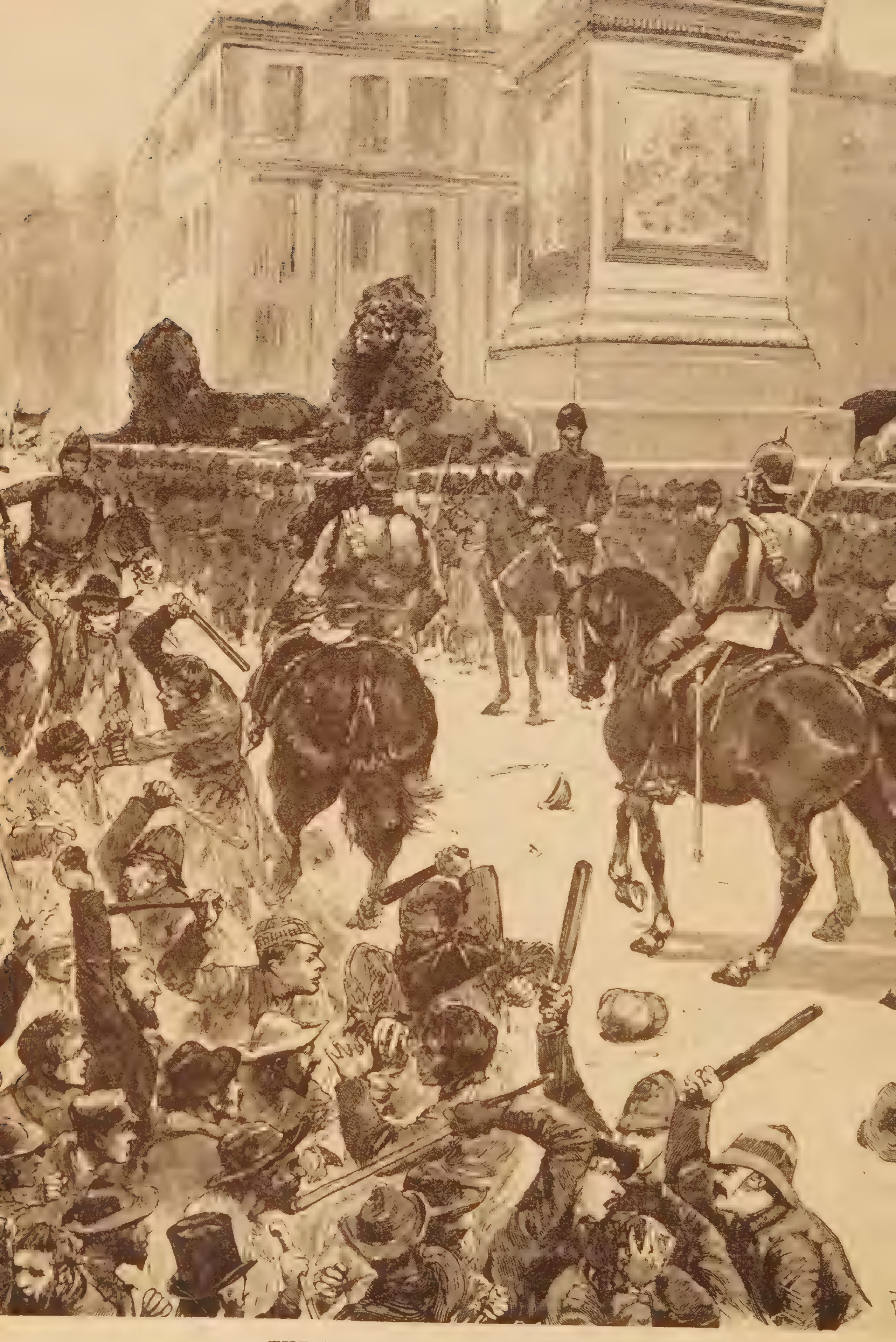
Looking down through rigging like that of a ship, ratlines and ropes, that ran from the gallery upon which we stood to the high roof, I saw the gymnasium floor with fellows boxing, wrestling, performing on horizontal and parallel bars, swinging Indian clubs, fencing, at work with single-sticks and dumbbells. A couple in the center of a white-clad circle were finely occupied with rapiers. A group did wonders on the vaulting horse. A drill-sergeant and a stocky-built fellow thrust and guarded with bayonet. I could have watched such activities throughout the evening, but Bill beckoned. So we passed through a door and found ourselves looking down from another gallery into the green water of a great swimming pool, white-tiled and beautiful; looking at shining white swimmers, and a diver who hung a moment in mid-air then entered the water with the smoothness of a seal, and the shadowy shapes of those who swam under water, and fearful learners.

We saw a reading room. Elsewhere a debating society held its session, a parliamentary debating society with ministerial benches and opposition, and speaker and clerks. Beyond that, in a long room with many pillars and many tables, players sat at chess and checkers. Along one end of the room ran a lunch counter. The glass-covered catalogue of a lending library occupied the half of a wall. It was all more rich and wonderful than anything I had imagined. Nothing more seemed possible in the way of enjoyment. But then my eye fell on a wall that held notice boards of different societies and groups, and a whole world of new wonders appeared. One, a daring placard of red and black belonging to a Mutual Improvement Society, announced

SOCIALISM VERSUS ANARCHISM
A DEBATE

Others announced that the Polytechnic Harriers would take a ten-mile cross-country run starting from Hendon; that the Shorthand Club would hold a competition; that the French Society would read a Molière play; that the Saturday Walkers would visit Epping Forest; that a Literary Society would consider the merits and demerits of the American Constitution; that the Photographers' Club would take pictures of Surrey; that the Cyclists would ride to Brighton; that the orchestra would tackle Beethoven's Fifth; that the Sketching Club would meet at the Spaniards.

A map of the complex joy and charm of life seemed to lie outspread. I wanted to belong to everything, to try everything, to know everybody. I wanted to be one in that buoyant companionship. The Polytechnic seemed to me a place of plurality of development, muscular, intellectual, emotional.



THE TRAFALGAR SQUARE RIOT

BOOK II

Living for Others

CHAPTER I

Enrichment of Motive

I

FOURTEEN days later my relationship with the narrow world about me had changed and Fate had woven a new pattern. The component parts were the same as before, but all were in new juxtaposition, much as by the slightest turn of a kaleidoscope a strange geometric design clicks into being. For a long time, going over and over the same arguments, we at home had discussed the possibility of my going to the United States, to which move I was averse. My mother yearned to keep the family together and said so. That one of her offspring should have to face the battle of life struck her as something almost like tragedy. "If you were comfortably settled," she told me, "then I could bring myself to leave you. Otherwise not." So to appear settled became a duty to the accomplishment of which I bent every effort, succeeding in the nick of time. And within the space of six days I had said good-bye to my mother and brothers and sisters at Liverpool and had seen the steamer drop into the Mersey, had moved into lodgings in a house rented by a woman who gave me to understand that she had seen better days, and found myself a cog of no importance in the economic machine. The change to me was as if the little stage on which I had played my part had suddenly become extended by the raising of a back scene, so that my personal drama became merged in a greater play, with a new set of actors in a smoothly running drama that absorbed my previous personal comedy.

This was the fashion of my becoming a cog in the economic machinery. From the *Daily Telegraph* I chose four advertisements that pleased me; then made application for the positions by letter, using the stilted phraseology in which such documents are by convention couched, quite as though it were a piece of unparalleled daring to offer one's services. The letters had to appear to propitiate with self-abnegation the deity who demanded postulants. The application was a sort of prostration in utter humility before the powerful being who held sway. It was an incantation. It was a litany.

Reading the finished supplication, it came to me to wonder how Thoreau would have regarded such a document, and, presently, out of that wonderment something grew in my mind that became a postscript to each of the applications. It was really a sort of proud self-assertion to counterbalance the abnegations. It ran something like this:

> You may possibly receive applications from men of fuller and more varied experience than mine, for I have none whatever; but my energy will be found more satisfactory than the nice discrimination of the trained expert, therefore possibly enure to our mutual benefit.

I cannot explain the simulation of impudence to cover a fearful timidity. In my heart I hoped for rejections. It seemed a terrible piece of business for a man to go about offering to sell himself. But I dropped the letters into the post office and remembered Sir Galahad's cry of "If I lose myself I find myself."

But, like some obscure happening in a rollicking extravaganza, three of the four applications brought replies, bidding me present myself for examination and conference. One came from the head master of a church school where someone was required to play the piano and harmonium and train the boys to sing in chorus for a choir. The second advised me that the freight department at the Paddington Station would examine me for the position of night-checking clerk, to work between nine p. m. and six a. m. The third communication carried a whimsical tone, and, in effect, informed me that if I did not utterly discredit myself when called upon to read aloud a page from Addison's *Spectator*, and would hold no over-lofty conception about remuneration, the position of "reading companion to gentleman" might be mine. It added that a knowledge of French would be an additional recommendation.

On the whole, the railroad job appealed to me most strongly as being slightly adventurous and removed from circumscribed respectability, though because of schemes and designs I had formed to spend my evenings at the Polytechnic, I did not greatly yearn for it. The training of boys to sing entirely failed to interest me. The old gentleman who wanted someone to read to him seemed promising, especially if I could persuade him to a more vivid type of literature. The mention of French made me hopeful of Zola. So it took a little time before my mind was comfortably settled, my final decision being tinged with mild bravado. I would follow the adventure far enough to experience things, finally settling matters in each case with a noble and high-minded refusal on the ground of insufficient pay, then, by other applications, since the making of applications was so easily prolific, discover activities more to my liking. It would be an experiment in applying for jobs. Or should I be rejected, then the experiment would be a training in disappointment. I would cultivate indifference to rebuff to the end that when earnestness possessed me because of need, my anxiety could not be my own defeat. So everything seemed simple. Yet I planned idly, for with three possibilities certain mysterious influences so exerted themselves that an independent ease of manner possessed me. I won where I thought to have lost. An appearance of refined prosperity probably made me seem desirable.

2

There was the case of the man who wanted someone to read to him. He turned out to be a young man, while I had expected to see an octogenarian, and his name was Printer, E. Printer; though what the E. stood for I never learned. He lived in a spacious house that had a serious and even melancholy look, in Portland Place. Whether he owned it, or whether his parents owned it, or whether he merely pitched his camp there I never learned. I saw nothing but the hall and the library under the guidance of a bearded servant, who, to my recollection, never spoke a word. He signified attention with a slight bowing of the head, listened with the focused interest of a physician, indicated a hall chair with a hand wave and polite gesture, departed softly, returned softly, then led the way to a library where I met E. Printer. And E. Printer was a young man of large size and heavy build and heavy manner of speech, with a habit of shooting out assertions, studying their effect on me to dismiss them at the moment I started to criticize them. "I hope it doesn't annoy you, you know, but really we must get on with the thing we are doing," he would say seriously, as if I had been the cause of interruption.

"This is interesting," he said, at our first meeting, standing in front of me, towering, while I sat in a low-cushioned chair that gave with my weight, so that I seemed to sink lower and lower, to shrink to unimportance, and felt myself to be buried in the wreckage of my high hope about dominating the situation. When he flung out an arm for oratorical purposes I became still smaller, he almost majestic. "I thought you might be a blustering kind of fellow, you know. All that stuff about your energy and lack of experience you know. And here you are without uproar, without trying to talk about money, without black panic, so to speak. You know what I mean. Last week there came a man so anxious to be my reader that he was in black panic. Absolutely panic-struck. Nervous as a cat. Now a nervous man can never read with effect, eh? What? Quite impossible. Then there was a woman who came. Dramatic sort of old girl; sort that would go out and burn an orphanage if you offended her. Wanted to snap up the job. Talked about burning aspirations—I don't refer to the orphanage—burning poetic aspirations, I mean. Then there was a bright chap, bright at the start, but slow and pathetic when he began to talk about money. Money's the murderer of character. Eh?"

"As to that——" I began, but he interrupted.

"I hope it doesn't annoy you, but we'll not argue. . . . If you had not been able to read well you hardly would have applied for the—I mean, written to me. So we'll let that part of it go. I wouldn't apply for a job as bricklayer. Would I? Or captain of a ship. So what's the use of all this nonsense about experience? I might apply for the position of Member of Parliament, or Cabinet minister. Experience is not necessary to rule men, you know, in a political kind of way. Anyone's good enough for that job. Most of the time you elect a man because you hate his opponent instinctively. That's all. Generally you can't have qualifications without experience. That's the rule. The exception comes in matters of government. Eh? What? How's that?" He nodded in the manner of one pleased with the thought.

"My idea in writing you——" I began.

"Exactly," he said. "Go on. Go on, please. But we won't argue. We'll handle the thing we're doing."

"Having always enjoyed reading——" I said, and tried to wrench myself into a less recumbent position, so as to become more self-assertive.

"You find that chair comfortable, I hope," he said, with solicitude. "If you enjoy reading the thing's done. Say no more. As for emoluments, of course you couldn't live on the pay for three hours, reading a week. You have other sources of income. Naturally. There is your appearance. Suppose you work out the problem to discover what you seem to be worth by the waking working hour. Eh? Then put in your bill at twice or three times that amount. How, then? We've got to make a determined effort to base the service on a firm foundation, and that seems as good a way as any. . . . So now let's drop the unpleasant side of the affair which must naturally annoy you."

"Of course that seems fair," I began. "On the whole, it's the best way of dealing with the matter." I intended to say more, but emphasis in that chair seemed impossible.

"Then we'll arrange everything so as to give no annoyance," he said. "I shall put a little loose money on the mantelpiece each Friday, and you can take what you think proper. So that's settled. We can then assume a kind of free-and-easy sociability. We'll take some noble-minded book and commence to read it, preferably one new to both of us. Then as we go on, if we come to some reference, or some name not familiar, we'll look the matter up and exhaust that, then get back to the main thing again. A man should get a liberal education from a book that way. I heard the Reverend H. R. Haweis talking about a fellow named Emerson the other day. . . . But please yourself. Please yourself. There is another remarkable man named Henry George. It might be interesting to know what he's up to. I heard Hyndman speak highly of him. At Lady Jeune's, I think. Then there's a fellow named Whiteman or Whitman, or some such name. An American. A sort of poet. We'll look him up. But I leave it entirely to you. I suppose you are a British Museum reader . . . No? . . . I'll get you a ticket, a reader's ticket. . . . By the way. May I ask a favor?"

He went to the bookcase. "Have you ever read this?" he asked, and handed me a volume of a set of Boswell's *Life of Johnson.* It opened of itself and I found a marked passage. It was the account of Boswell's delicate persuasion when trying to induce Johnson to go to Sir Joshua's where the matter of the Italian tour might be talked of, and doing what seemed to be expected, I read it aloud.

Then and there the manner of my man became confidential. "The most straightforward, outspoken, independent and subtly humorous man that ever lived, this Samuel Johnson. That settles it. We'll read Boswell; yet we'll not read him. We'll start to read then go off on any tangent that presents itself. Johnson. O, Lord! Always sets me thinking, and that's why I want to listen to reading. If you read you must hold your thoughts down. If you listen to reading your thoughts fly. That's why music's good to listen to. Leaves you free to think. Outspoken old fellow, telling Mrs. Boswell that he was a better judge of cooking than any man who stayed at home, because the home-staying man accommodated his taste to his meals; saying that he could write a better cookery book than had ever been written; saying that the best road a Scot ever saw was that which led to England. Prejudiced old chap."

I advanced the suggestion, in the vernacular of that day, that Johnson might have been "joshing" the all-too-serious Boswell, and the idea seemed to interest Mr. Printer.

"We'll not argue, but it's a new light on the old man. Looks reasonable. Told Bozzy he didn't like music. Told his host who wanted to wrench table conversation to a lofty plane that he knew nothing about botany because he wasn't a reptile. Telling someone to talk of the boat race but not of the Punic war or the depravity of human nature. . . . It looks reasonable."

So we had a pleasant hour, and it was not until I walked homeward that I remembered that I had actually engaged myself.

3

Being in my lodgings I became aware of a phrase running through my mind. "A snapper-up of unconsidered trifles in the way of jobs," it ran, not clear-cut and distinct, but tangled with

Lowliness is young ambition's ladder,
Whereto the climber-upward turns his face

and also,

There cannot be a more intolerable thing than a fortunate fool.

My mental man, it seemed, amused itself by letting down a net into the deeps of memory, then raising it to discover wriggling passages like those. To abolish them I told myself, "It's a nuisance, but I'd better," then came the annoying quotation again, "Strike while the iron is hot." Besides, the railroad job invited me because I remembered how my physical self had shrunk when I sat in Mr. Printer's chair, and I wanted to reject a job in superb and towering style. But no man can be superb and towering while huddled down among cushions. I determined that I would stand when in the railroad office. "Strive hence for mastery," came into my mind, springing from some unrecognized source.

The freight office turned out to be a gas-lit, dingy, dusty, over-crowded, disorderly, stuffy place with a sulphurous smell and no seats at all except a couple of very experienced chairs. The eight clerks either perched on long-legged stools, or stood to do their writing. No one paid any attention to my presence until I asked, generally, for Mr. Featherstone, whose name had appeared on the letter I had received, when a man with a high-pitched voice asked me my business, then beckoned me toward him with a commanding wave of a long ebony ruler which he held scepter-fashion during the greater part of the interview. He was sandy-haired, thin, worried-looking, weak of chin, yellow-skinned, spectacled, and about forty years of age. He manifested no curiosity. His manner to me was that of a householder fronting a mendicant begging for a crust. A much older man than he, evidently a subordinate, hovered near with an air of being ready to give assistance if called upon. It seemed like a scene from the *Arabian Nights*, as if I faced pasha and vizier.

"Featherstone!" exclaimed the pasha, after a little while, and the vizier smiled pityingly. "It's me you've got to see," he added, but he ran his words together in the way of nervous folk so it sounded like "'T-smeeyougotasee." He added emphatically, "Me. Your humble servant."

Hearing that a composite picture of Silas Wegg and Uriah Heep leaped to mind, though I tried to dismiss it to the obbligato of "Reading maketh a full man—too full altogether. You're stuffed with books, stuffed just as Bill says you used to stuff yourself with food." Then I brought my mind to attention to hear the pasha scolding and complaining. "You ought to know better. It's not the style of this here joint, my boy, to go over people's 'eads. Application's all out of order. Ought to address the department. Me, not Featherstone. Mr. Featherstone's American. He's got 'Merican methods. 'E's nothing to do with this. It's me that passes on all applications. No one gets a job here without fillin' up a form. This form." He indicated a paper, discovered that it was not what he wanted, then turned to his vizier and said, testily, "The form, Glass. The form."

Glass, who had been standing with his hands behind his back, seemingly all-engrossed with his superior's eloquence, produced the yellow paper, causing it to materialize at a wish, like a conjuror.

In the back of my mind ran a whisper telling me to get up a little antagonism, but I tried to thrust it aside when I found a quotation cropping up which ran "Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God." In spite of my effort I heard myself say, "It must have been annoying, that disregarding of you," and the pasha suddenly became excited, almost in a perplexed way. To follow up a point gained, I added, inventing influence, "My uncle should have known better and warned me, being one of the shareholders."

"Eh!" the pasha exclaimed, and stiffened his back. "What's that? What d' ye mean?"

I wanted to let the matter drop, sensing it to be dangerous, but the spirit of romance urged me. "I mean it must have seemed unreal and impossible. It probably altered the current of your life." I say I heard my voice saying that because the self-conscious superiority of the man made a thrill of resentment run up my spine; privately I visioned dramatic possibilities such as taking him by the throat and shaking him in the manner of romantic fiction. But surroundings were all in his favor and he had the audience. The clerks were attentive and he had authority prestige to guard. The reputation of an eye to over-awe and a voice to control had to be maintained.

"None of that nonsense in this shop," he said, and by way of moral support the vizier coughed against his finger tips. "No silly gassin'. You fill up this 'ere printed form then I'll see to you." Therewith he seemed to withdraw himself from the case and riffled some papers, radiating irritability.

"Perfectly reasonable," I said, trying to gain in the game of insult, but failing to score a triumph. "I'll take the paper home and look it over, then let you know whether I want the job or not."

"It strikes me the job won't want you," he said, at which sally someone at a high desk laughed, so momentary triumph rested with the thin man. "If it did, you'd find I'm boss of this show," he went on. "You'd learn my ways."

"That's what I'm afraid of. Influence of association, you see," I began, trying for a checkmate, but the words were flung on empty air because the thin man became suddenly very bright and courteous and jerkily active at the entry of a square-shaped, red-faced man, one of those who give an impression of breezy good-humor. Suddenly the atmosphere of the place became one of tremendous diligence. Pens scratched busily, so I knew that a superior personage had come and the conflict was suspended. Such unremitting industry was not normal. I fell to studying the printed form, and filling in items.

Just as the expansive man turned to leave, he said, "By the way, Morris, seen anything of that fellow who wrote the don't-give-a-damn-whether-I-get-the-job-or-not letter? That fellow who applied for the night job. By the way, how many were there? Ten? Twenty? Fifty? What?"

"I'm examinin' 'im now, Mr. Featherstone," answered the thin man, indicating me.

"Eh? Oh! You are." He turned to me. "So you're the fellow who offers energy instead of experience. Well, well, well. You haven't had experience and ain't afraid to say so. Damned unusual. It's a damned odd way of trying to get a job. . . . Well, let's give him a trial. Put him on. Tell the others we're all fixed. Now when I——"

What he intended to say I never learned, for the messenger boy came with a letter. But while he talked the clerks held themselves ready to be appreciative of any facetious comment he saw fit to make. Their industry slackened perceptibly as soon as he commenced to talk.

"Well, we'll clear you up," said the thin man to me as soon as his superior officer had gone. He seemed honorably forgiving. "Now let's see. Schooling. Yes. Hm! But what about this? Where you worked before. You didn't fill that in. You've worked before at what?"

"Only as piano-player, and that was in a penny-gaff," I answered, not intending any witticism, but conscious of the incongruity.

The thin man threw himself back in his chair and flung his hands apart. "You can't put that down, you know. This is a railway. That won't do."

"But it's true. It's the only work I ever did to be paid for."

"Not what I call a respectable job," he said. "Far from it . . . Well, perhaps it doesn't matter so much since Mr. Featherstone wants to give you a trial, and I'm favorable. So I'll put down—let's see. Ha! Railway porter. That'll do. Railway porter on the L. B. & S. C. R. is only a mere matter of form." Then, the rest of the blanks being filled with an eye to what Mr. Stefansson called, wittily, "truth by definition," the thin man dismissed me with "Monday night at nine, sharp." As I left I noticed his threatening brow.

4

Nor did I escape employment at the school, to which I went on my bicycle, for I was the only applicant. The matter was arranged in less than twenty minutes, three quarters of that space of time being devoted to an exposition of Mr. Oldham's views on respectability in education. He was a melancholy man. The interview took place while he was standing before an empty grate, in the empty melancholy schoolroom, a long chamber poorly lighted and evidently intended for five classes, judging by the arrangement of desks.

In gloominess of soul Mr. Oldham asked me to play a hymn or two of his own choosing, which I did, on a harmonium with leaking bellows. In greater gloominess he called for and heard me play the "Dead March" from *Saul*. Then, very mournfully, he spoke of limited finances and named the sum the successful applicant would receive monthly, which was so small that I doubted whether I had heard correctly. He asked me questions about my politics but not about my religion, taking that for granted. He told me that my services would be required three times each week, between three and four, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. As an afterthought he asked me where I lived, and when I told him he made reply that it was a respectable neighborhood. Of the schools I had attended he approved. Perhaps he suffered from lapses of memory, perhaps he wanted to test my truthfulness, or else my memory, for he asked some of the questions twice.

"The 'ymns," he told me, "will be easy to 'andle. It's chorus singin' I 'ave in mind. We want," he went on with some hesitation, "to get up a nigger minstrel. We like to do that. The parents like it. We call it Massachusetts minstrels." He pronounced the word as "Mass-ak-u-setts." It is quite popular in the neighborhood and we do it every year. I want you to train the boys. They are very respectable. The money comes out of the church-choir fund of course. A trifle irregular perhaps but the vicar agrees so it's all right. I would very much like to start on Monday afternoon, at three. Three to four. Very much indeed."

The man's melancholy quite overcame me. He was like a soul in distress. So I promised that I would not disappoint him, although I had not the slightest intention of engaging myself. But he seemed to drift along so helplessly that I could not resist a helping hand. Had he asked me to train his boys for nothing I do not think I would have refused. I here seemed again to be two me's.

"You will not disappoint us," he said, at the door, in the manner of one who would have found it the saddest of human experiences had I done so. For a little while I meditated refusal, while thinking him to be the most exactly symmetrical man I had ever seen. Bisecting him longitudinally, in imagination, his right side seemed to be the mirrored reflection of his left. His hair was parted exactly in the middle, his right whisker exactly matched his left, his tie was perfection, his coat and pockets exactly similar, he held his hands lightly touching at the finger tips. He seemed the personification of primness.

"I shall not suffer disillusionment then," he said ruefully, almost tenderly.

It came to me with something of a shock that perhaps his Mass*ak*usetts made one of the few bright spots in his life. If I failed him I would make havoc with his whole life.

"I'll come if you promise to call it Massachusetts and not Mass*ak*usetts," I answered.

"Is that the proper way to pronounce it?" he asked, with the first real evidence of interest I had seen in him, and I assured him that it was.

"Bless my soul! Have I been teaching it wrong all these years?" he asked. He tried the new word once or twice. "Massa-*chew*-setts! Chew. Somehow that seems to have a—well, a kind of common sound. Almost vulgar. Massa-chew-setts.

How strange! Chew! Massa-chew-setts! The chew does sound, well, er, common. Well, I'll remember that." He tried the word again and again, until it dropped from him less reluctantly.

"It wasn't quite my idea to take the job," I said, urged by a sudden hardness, as I took the handles of my bicycle. Then I caught his sad, somber eye. It was a trustful, a pleading sort of eye. It seemed to be the sort of eye that asked for affection and sympathy. "But I'll be on time all right. We might have good fun with that minstrel idea."

"Oh, rare fun," he said mournfully. "I depend upon you."

So I mounted and rode away, and, looking back as I turned the corner, I saw that he gazed after me anxiously, almost like a lone sheep that watches a departing shepherd.

5

A third of the world and a third of a century separate me from my first sight of the British Museum reading room, but I feel a shadow of my emotions now. I cannot take out, from the little gilt and glass clock where it is kept, my reader's ticket, without knowing once more that tranced expectancy which I felt at first sight of the place; the shelves of books rising tier by tier, up to galleries on which soft-footed messengers and librarians moved; the impressive, old-time, red-leather catalogues, great books in which slips with written titles were pasted; the radiating reading desks where students sat, each in his own niche; all the wonder to be discovered if one walked about with observing eyes, such as wise-looking old gentlemen lost in happy pursuits, bright young women with proof sheets, gentlemen wearing skull caps who I regarded with reverence as mighty figures in the world of letters; the strange smell of books; the variegated colors of them; the notabilities which were pointed out to me but whom I did not see because I saw their idealized image; Beatrice Potter who knew so much about the life of the East End dock-laborer and who afterward became Mrs. Sidney Webb; Francis Galton; Walter Besant, bearded and keen-eyed; a clerical looking gentleman of whom it was said that for many years he had been the first in the library when it opened and had never missed a day; Stewart Headlam, a little man, all energy and kindliness and enthusiasm; Captain H. H. Champion, a soldier every inch of him. A dozen others were pointed out to me, men and women playing their part doing something in the service of man, seeking a path toward reform of social arrangements, devoting themselves to the reorganization of society. So my sensations were those of awe, as when one enters a sanctuary. I felt, seeing that world of books, as when I first looked across a sea. I felt as I had when standing on the cliff at Land's End watching green-and-white-crested rollers coming, waves beyond and still more waves, a world of waters plunging landward in thundering majesty, knowing that beyond where sea and sky met in mist and across thousands of miles of sea-breakers there were new lands and continents.

So I did nothing for an hour or more except explore the shelves that held books of reference, idling with no end in view, but full of curious anticipation. But my mind was busy wondering, for in the midst of all the books that a man could desire, with the stored-up knowledge of the whole world within reach, where should I begin? What did I want to know? How know the gold from the dross? I made valiant, vague determinations to begin somewhere.

Presently I went into the wash room, still exploring, and there saw two men. One, a black-browed, shabbily dressed, saturnine looking fellow who talked in a grumbling way, said to the other, "I see that Frederic Harrison's going to talk tomorrow afternoon at Fetter Lane."

"What subject?" asked the other.

"Oh, how and what to read, or something of the kind. I didn't notice the exact title. Positivists are only amateurs in reform movements. Just playing at things. Seems to me that people who don't know what to read—well, it's obviously waste of time telling them."

"Don't agree, Withington," said the other. "Harrison's no anarchist, to be sure, but he always says something when he talks. Sorry I'll be miles away on Sunday. Out to the provinces with William Morris. By the way, Morris was saying the other day that Jefferies's *After London* was one of the best romances he'd ever read."

The saturnine fellow grunted, as he dried his hands on his handkerchief, a hostile grunt, a grunt that would thwart good-humored comment anywhere. "Fiction. Fiction. Fiction. You don't make revolutions with fiction," he grumbled. The rest came indistinctly because while he talked he occupied himself with a tooth that seemed to interest him profoundly. "If I could change all London into the dismal swamp that Jefferies makes of it, I'd do so to-morrow. Wipe out the four million crawling human maggots A million starving and a million on the verge of starvation. London's a rotten carcass so far gone that it can't support the maggots it has bred."

The effect of what he said upon me was prodigious. I felt like one participating in crime in the making. *That* kind of thing in the British Museum seemed like sacrilege. I had a haunting doubt about the man as one who might be a Fenian with an infernal machine. To my astonishment the other man accepted the remark with calmness where I had expected outspoken resentment. "By the way, Withington, the other day I heard Kropotkin say——" he began in an even voice, but the saturnine one interrupted him.

"Look here, Mowbray. Kropotkin calls himself an anarchist but he'd faint if he saw a mouse killed. That sort's a living lie. An anarchist worth his salt would be with us at . . ." The rest of it was cut off from me by the slam of the closing door as they went out.

6

On Sunday I found Fetter Lane and Newton Hall where the Positivists held their meetings, found, too, meat for the eater, abundantly set out. I remember with delight the hall so clean and light and orderly; its long bookcases surmounted by busts of philosophers and historians and musicians; the audience whose manner was packed with serious earnestness; Frederic Harrison, the lecturer, handsome and bearded and of pleasant address, shining with high purpose. As he talked, greatly he won upon me because of many things he said; his orderliness of thought; the stating of his fundamental maxim of "Live for others!" He strayed from his subject in the easy and graceful manner in which a host, showing his estate, might go out of the set way to please his guests with a sight of the beauties and glories of a patch of flowers. Somehow out of that first acquaintance with Positivism an idea became planted in me that has never left me. It is that in a broad kind of way men of influence may be classed under three main heads: men of feeling, such as the founders of new religions; men of thought, such as the makers of systems of philosophy, musicians, scientists; men of action in all fields of endeavor.

He strayed from his subject to say something about art and a taste for the ugly in art, for then, as now, there were "new" schools, the exponents of which proclaimed themselves forerunners of what was to be in a score of years. He told us that there never had been, nor would be, an epoch of great art which had not its own religious, social or national enthusiasm as well as a sense that the mission of art was to minister to a nobler life. He heaped scorn on the heads of noisy nonentities whose ideal seemed to be dullness or eccentricity or brutality.

As I listened I remembered hundreds and hundreds of illustrated papers that I had stored away, the hoarded stuff of years. I resolved to dispose of them, but while I made plans he swept into a discussion of books and reading, so I hastily dismissed thoughts of them and brought myself to attention.

What he said affected me directly, especially his condemnation of wholesale reading as an unhappy stuffing of the mind so that one became enfeebled by excess. When he remarked that the important thing was to know what not to read, I found myself wishing I had heard that ten years earlier. When he told us, very quietly, almost as one might point out to a child that a flower had been choked by weeds, that great books had been suffocated by an avalanche of unimportant books, I became mentally uneasy. For I had collected literary débris and guarded it, ignorant of the things of real value.

Presently what I began to hear made me scribble notes hastily on the blank leaf of a pamphlet. "Lit. a shrine containing best thght humn race." "Lit's centrl note is dominant influence of sociology." "Carlyle's *French Revolution* example of powr to infuse exact recrd with poetic vitality." "Lit. mind of race." But I gave up taking notes because while I strove to catch one diamond a dozen fell unheeded.

What seemed to be the net import of things was this. I stood convicted of the sin of being a mere trash gatherer, and that I would be no longer. Most firmly, uncompromisingly, deliberately I resolved upon action. The trees of my forest were burdened with dead branches and strangling parasites. It was my duty to raise a storm to clear them.

So came the great destruction, as destruction always comes with the conqueror in spite of alleged high motives. An army of occupation has always meant retaliation, and I was occupied. Dreamlike and fantastic it seems now, in retrospect; hard to record too, as must be all silly deeds done in moments of disillusionment because of the impact of new ideas. But sometimes it seems as if the life of the individual was an epitome of the life of the race. And in me dwelt, for a time, the mood of destroying bigots. It was the mood of Caliph Omar when Egypt-conquering Amry found the Alexandrian library in his possession, and Omar said, "These are useless and need not be preserved." It was the mood of the crusaders when they burned the Tripoli library; of the Spaniards in Mexico when they destroyed the Aztec picture writings; of Ximenes before Granada. It was bigotry.

That night I looked over my possessions, things treasured for many years, and obtained by sacrifice, for there had been many acquisitions besides books. In drawers, in boxes and on shelves, dispossessing my clothes, were periodicals and pamphlets and magazines. The care of them had been a labor of love. They lay clean and orderly, each unbound volume carefully wrapped in tissue paper, and tied and tagged, the periodical not folded, for fear of creasing. There were complete sets of *Jack Harkaway*, all of the series of highwaymen stories, a lavishly illustrated *History of the British Prize Fighters*. One box held the *Newgate Calendar*, *Lives of the British Hangmen*, *The Maiden Tribute to Modern Babylon*, the *Last Dying Speeches* *and Confessions of Notable Criminals.* Package after package of weekly papers in serial order I took out, regarded with considerable emotion then set aside; the *Boy's World*, the *Boy's Standard*, the *Boy's History of England;* and condemning them I remembered, and partly remember to this day, incidents from the stories they contained. There were volumes of the *Boy's Own Paper* in monthly parts, from the first number, some of them with handsome colored plates; and illustrated weeklies of rollicking fun, such as *Scraps* and *Ally Sloper's Half-Holiday.* A stack of penny novelettes went without a second thought, but volumes from No. 1, Vol. 1, of *Tit-Bits*, *Rare Bits*, *Cassell's Saturday Journal* and *Great Thoughts* gave me a wrench. There were ragged books bought second-hand, vivid tales by such able hands as George Manville Fenn, Stables, Aimard, Henty, Verne, Ballantyne. Pamphlets too had to go; a collection bound in olive-green paper by the Financial Reform Association and giving statistics of the cost of the Royal Family, and the pension lists, besides much more of similar nature tending to show that a monarchical institution, however limited in power, was the last folly of man. It had always seemed of highest importance, though I had never stopped to reason why, that I should be well informed as to Her Majesty's Privy Purse, and the expenses of the Royal Household, and the exact amount of expenditures upon palaces occupied and not occupied, and the royal yachts. Privately, when I considered the cases of Roderick Manlean who had shot at the queen, and Albert Young who had threatened to shoot at her, and Charles Brookshaw who had threatened to kill the Prince of Wales, and John Magee the half-insane and wholly bankrupt photographer who had sent a threatening letter to the prince, I thought that they were on the right track as doing something to rid humanity of an incubus. That line of thought had led to the purchase and preservation of many other pamphlets having to do with the cost of hereditary pensions, and payments made to the keepers of hawks and falcons for the royal entertainment should Victoria find destructive joy in the way of hawking to be an increase of happiness. And there were many pamphlets about the cost of hereditary descendants of the illegitimate progeny of Charles II, the expenditure thereby incurred seeming to me to be a problem of sufficient worth to occupy every thoughtful man.

A great number of miscellaneous pamphlets gave me pause because of their strange interest; free-thought stuff about the biblical account of the flood, and Jonah, and sun-myths, and phallic symbols, and all the rest of the amusing bag of tricks of a sort that to-day Mr. Haldeman-Julius exhibits with great spirit, and in wider sweeps and with greater activity than it was ever done before. Bradlaugh and Annie Besant and Foote and Ramsay battered down the walls of roofless ruins as if they were performing a divine service. Haldeman-Julius does the same thing in the spirit of a Barnum, calling for a vast arena and a tremendous audience and loud trumpets, with remarkably small admission fee when the excitement is considered.

As Voliva and his disciples to-day have persuaded themselves and would persuade others that the earth is flat, so also in those days there were flat-earthers led by a man named Hampden, whose Zetetic society published many pamphlets. Those went to swell the pile. A complete collection of Captain Wilson's booklets on what he called Comprehensionism, an elaborate system of symbolism; speeches by Mr. Gladstone on the Channel tunnel, Home Rule, woman's suffrage; fifty pamphlets on vegetarianism, and many on spiritualism, on Annie Besant's advocacy of the limitation of offspring, on the failure of marriage, on the advantages of free love, on the doctrine of Mormonism, on education as it was and is and should be, these and many more were set aside for destruction. The things we excited ourselves about in those days were exactly similar to the fashionable excitements of to-day.

Also there were bundles of popular piano music, waltzes and polkas and lancers and quadrilles, potpourris of songs of the day arranged for the piano by Dan Godfrey; books of minstrel music as popularized by Moore and Burgess, and Christy; drawing-room sentimentalities by Brinley Richards; songs that enjoyed a skyrocket career such as "The Two Obadiahs," "Tommy Make Room for Your Uncle," "Over the Garden Wall," "The Maid and the Magpie," "Benjamin Binns," all of them with massively ugly decorated covers. There were photographs of celebrities of my liking; and heroes of my worship: Henry Irving, Wilson Barrett, Ellen Terry, Mary Anderson, the White-eyed Kaffir, Dan Leno in many attitudes and costumes; jockeys and cyclists, military and naval heroes, especially General Gordon and Lord Charles Beresford; David Livingstone and Du Chaillu and other explorers; a scrapbook of notabilities clipped from newspapers and *The Graphic;* two small plaster of Paris busts of Dickens and Gladstone. After some hesitation I added to the heap that which remained of my juvenile literature: *Sandford and Merton*, an honorably ragged *Robinson Crusoe*, some Sunday-school books, and a school prize book entitled *The Silver Trumpet* that had always struck me as being extremely silly because it made a drunken man act on the advice of a thirteen-year-old child. To complete the condemned literature there were several volumes of *Peter Parley*, of *Chatterbox*, and of *Sunday*.

I had gone along, very industriously, in the spirit of one making warfare against elaboration, hesitating sometimes because of associated memories but on the whole thoroughly convinced that I drove a tandem team of idealism and common sense. I could imagine Thoreau a trifle cynical in an encouraging way, asking "To what moon was all this stuff to bridge a way?" Or he might have put the question, "What amount of life have you exchanged for all this?" All of which was very well, but an argument seemed to be going on within me. Obviously to march to new horizons with all that lumbering stuff, horizons actual or spiritual, was an impossibility, yet how to rid myself of it loomed large as a question, requiring adequate settlement. The easy solution was to offer it all for sale to some second-hand dealer, but that would be begging the question, not really simplifying it. The dealer would reap a profit by passing my rejected possessions on to someone else to whom they would become a nuisance in time, to say nothing of the objectional way in which he would transact business as if doing me a favor. But was it my concern if someone picked up that which I rejected? In a very real sense, yes, because the greater part of the stuff, considered as literature, was beneath contempt, and I should not put myself in the false position of thinking that what was not good for me was good enough for someone else. And if I did sell, what of the biting scorn of Thoreau? There were many "ifs" and "besides" and "maybes," with a swift thrusting aside of softer feelings that persisted in intruding themselves when I picked up some paper or weekly or photograph remembered with affection, for I told myself that whatever evokes emotion disturbs judgment.

Over the contents of a little chest of mahogany, the work of a sailor uncle who died at sea, I hesitated very much longer than over the choicest of magazines, debating with myself, pulled two ways. On the one hand there was my respect for tradition, on the other hand the passion for renunciation. Nor was it any light matter, for I had not read Pepys without becoming aware of the value of many things which disuse and changing customs make rare; but to balance that there was the new-born desire for simplification of life. Yet, obviously, if I marched to any new horizon I would have to go whole-souled; so why hesitate at discarding the useless?

Therefore I rid myself of accumulations, but not with the readiness of true zealousness. The Irish witch ball made of malachite, which a cousin had given me long ago, held me for some time. That charm to ward off disease was among the chief of what I called my relics. Then there was a muff warmer made of opaque glass, in the form of a cat, which my Aunt Alice had given me when such things went out of fashion. She used to carry it filled with port wine for discreet use on occasions when she felt faint. There were several valentines of laced paper and clever design, arranged to pull out telescopically and reveal dainty figures, and doves, and flower bowers and a heart, and a church. A little ivory hand that had tipped an ebony stick known as a back-scratcher went with the discarded things, also a small ball of vegetable ivory carved in the shape of a monkey's head. A silver scent bottle, a special constable's staff surmounted with a silver crown, a carefully arranged scrapbook with newspaper clippings about prize fights, three or four old ivory chessmen, a locket with a lock of my own hair twisted into a design, a collection of clay pipes fashioned like heads grotesque and otherwise—all those made a good-sized pile that looked ridiculous taken as a whole, so that I could not conceive why I should have been troubled at all about their rejection. Yet I kept on looking at the things, picking up first one and then another. A little tea-cup storm of condemnations and palliations raged for a moment or two. Then a flourishing agitation began to grow against the renunciation. Once ignoble compromise suggested itself. The veriest trash could be thrown away, the more promising stuff kept. Then I came to grips with myself and put the case in a strong light. "Is there anything here that I know to be useful or really believe to be beautiful?" and the answer seemed to satisfy.

So decision came. Carrying bundles in both hands I made five separate journeys to the canal and there cast my burdens into the waters, trying to feel like Bunyan stopping his ears with his finger tips to shut out the call of the world. When I returned to my room at the end of the job, when I saw the empty boxes and drawers, when I remembered stories grave and gay, and dramatic incidents in them that I had once intended to read again, there came a soul-searching and a cursing of myself for bigotry. Nor have I ceased to increasingly condemn myself as the years have sped.

CHAPTER II

Buoyant Companionship

I

MY INCOME from all sources amounted to the equivalent of five dollars a week, and on that basis I arranged my affairs and routine of life. Turning the pages of such notebooks as have survived, and failing to find evidences of anything but vivid life while remembering those days which were sometimes grinding, without any painful reminiscence, I come to uplifting conclusions. I must have had a smaller capacity for woe than many others who have written about their personal affairs in the days of poverty in young manhood, considering how they dedicated a shrine to grief. Consider Gissing, for example. Or Francis Thompson, living for five years as a beggar, selling matches, and calling cabs outside theaters, and sleeping under bridges and arches and in Covent Garden. But perhaps their ways were so narrow that they never broadened into companionship of a healthy kind. Or perhaps their digestions played them scurvy tricks. Or perhaps they lacked energy to climb out of degrading conditions. Or perhaps their emotions were finer than mine, their experiences more soul-searching. Still, my opinion is that altogether too many men are given to whine about their condition, their work, their petty troubles, their ills, their burdens. They get into the habit of posing for sympathy. They capitalize their cherished unhappiness and they nurture misery in the style of a miserable beggar. They advertise diseased brain and nerves. They lack self-discipline. They love martyrdom. They exhale misery and poison the air about them. They eject pessimism as a faulty auto engine ejects dangerous carbon monoxide.

It must be understood that there were changes of employment and that I came to an easy adaptability in the way of fitting myself to new conditions and environments, to seizing upon temporary jobs, to picking up a little money at writing, translating, acting as boat-house man at Henley-on-Thames, working for a while as seaman on board a pleasure yacht at Brighton, called the *Skylark;* but I cannot be documentary. Roughly, I kept my earnings at the figure I have said and was never seriously dismayed at being out of work. Also I looked to it well that whatever my employment, I kept intact a sort of margin by which I could go well dressed and so step out of a subordinate sphere to one higher.

The night work on the railroad turned out to be trying enough for often a bitter wind swept into the opening where I stood, wrapped in heavy sweater and overcoat to check and mark off on a waybill the incoming packages delivered by Bill and the other wagon men. But my blood ran warm and the cold was unnoticed at times of brisk labor. Also there was this by way of alleviation. At the intersection of two near-by streets stood an all-night coffee stall where a bowl of hot soup could be bought for a penny, a cup of tea or coffee for half of that price. And there, if one should not be at the mercy of moods, or too eager to take the lead in conversation, lay interest. For night-workers, homeless folk, young men "seeing life," policemen, mysterious people—all gathered to confide in the stall keeper. Three or four times I saw, seated inside the stall, a little pinch-faced, watery eyed, sharp-nosed and very ragged young man who the stall owner addressed as Thompson and said was a great writer, and I have often wondered since whether it could have been *the* Thompson, Francis Thompson. If so, what chance I missed by ignorance and a certain timidity. There, too, I became better acquainted with that very down-at-the-heels young man named Lothrop Withington, a mystery man with whom I got in closer touch later as shall be revealed. And in the shelter of the coffee stall, with fine disregard of rivalry and competition, a baked-potato man had his glowing fire in a bucket and drove a fine trade. For a penny he gave a pound weight roasted potato, salt, pepper and butter added free, and with soup and potatoes twice a night a healthy youth can stand much and front much, weather and hard work leaving him strangely indifferent. As for the wagon men, much as they lacked courtesy they had a strong vein of lightness and humor. So, taking it all in all, the railroad work turned out to be fairly pleasant, and, being released at six a.m., I mounted my bicycle, hurried to my lodgings, stripped to the buff, for from boyhood I had chosen to sleep naked, and would be asleep as soon as I touched the pillow.

The school work too turned out to be more pleasant than I had expected for I enjoyed music and the boys were lively and interesting as boys always are whatever their social sphere and upbringing. They seemed to regard the chorus singing as a delightful occupation and a welcome relief from class work, but we gave much more time to practicing the songs for the Massachusetts Minstrels programme than for choir work. After leaving Mr. Oldham's school I would present myself at E. Printer's, for the days coincided. There sometimes I read aloud while he sat in what seemed to be calm and reposeful absorption, but sometimes a passage sent us off into discussions. There were occasions when something read in Boswell induced us to make literary pilgrimages, as when we went to the tower of London because John Wilkes and Lord George Gordon had been imprisoned there; when we explored Southwark to find the sight of the White Hart Inn which had been the headquarters of Jack Cade who proclaimed himself Lord Mortimer and made himself temporary master of London; when we went to Whitehall and tried to picture the scene at the execution of King Charles I; when we hunted the British Museum in the hope of finding a pewter dish kept as a curiosity which had been rolled up by one Thomas Topham, a strong man.

2

Having the example of Thoreau in mind, I kept an account book for a time and my expenditures on the five-dollar-a-week basis ran thus:

Rent of furnished room each week	$1.44	
Breakfasts for the week total	.40	
Dinners	1.20	
Other meals	.48	
Laundry and mending	.25	
Shoe cleaning and barber	.10	
Pleasure	.30	
Balance put aside in post office bank	.83	
		$ 5.00

The total of the fifty-two weeks' balances I account for thus:

Two hats	$1.20	
Suit of clothes	9.50	
Pair of shoes	2.52	
Four pair socks	.80	
Other articles clothing	2.64	
Books	12.00	
Unaccounted for	9.50	
Total on hand at year's end	5.00	
		$ 43.16

The calculations are based on the exchange at that time which was four shillings and twopence to the dollar.

There were eating houses, or cook shops, unclean and unsanitary according to modern notions, in which a substantial meal of roast beef or mutton, with potatoes and cabbage and bread and coffee, could be had at a cost varying from twelve cents to eighteen cents, so a dollar and a half for a week's dinners represents occasional impulsive extravagances, mostly in the way of extra portions of meat. Four or five cents usually sufficed to pay for breakfast which I often took at a coffee stall. The third meal was a variable feast, sometimes taken at the counter in the basement of the Polytechnic, sometimes at a coffee house, sometimes at a fried fish shop in Marylebone where a young man of strong socialistic tendencies served favored customers of his political views with a certain liberality and happy carelessness, heaping a plate high with excellently cooked fish and French fried potatoes. He was not the proprietor. We had met by chance at a room near Gower Street where George Bernard Shaw talked about the impossibility of anarchism and the young man argued brilliantly that every true Marxian looked forward with confidence to a time when the state would disappear. Then a young man with a lisp in his speech spoke of the necessity for what he called "a united gesture of force" and, the meeting ended, the fried fish man and I walked together, our way being along the same route. So a friendliness became established and I patronized his place afterward, to my gain. Once, when I remarked upon his liberality of service, he said, "To each according to his needs. You have the appetite of a healthy horse. From each according to his abilities. You are not Crœsus." I found his political policy gratifying.

Sunday offered the big problem until I learned how to spend the day, for not only libraries and museums, but eating houses were closed. But I came to regard it as my day of exploration, not of London alone, but of its surrounding country. Starting early, after a breakfast at a coffee stall, and carrying a lunch, I would lose myself in a maze of streets deliberately so as to come, with a sense of adventure, upon literary and historical landmarks of which the ordinary Londoner seemed to care and know nothing. Thus once, when my traveling companion was Somerfield, a young architect with artistic bent, who had a taste for things topographical, we came upon some weather-beaten buildings, almost tumble-down, which were overlooked by a more stately house with a flag pole. A tall tree, almost dead, stood gaunt and grim, and some lads were gambling for halfpennies at the foot of it. Of an old man Somerfield made inquiries with careful civility. Did he know what the history of the tall house was? Did he know anything at all of the place? There was a note of impatience in the old man's voice as he made answer.

"It's a blessed place I'm sick of. Ten years I been 'ere, and if I see ten more I'm unlucky. The air of London gets into your bones, it does. It's not good for man or beast or any living thing. Look at that tree. Dead. Choked. Starved. I was country-bred. Bedford." Then suddenly his manner changed and he became

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furtive, whining, disgusting. "You don't 'appen to 'ave tuppence to spare, eh? Enough to buy a bit of bread an' a cup o' coffee." His hands closed over the threepenny piece we gave him, then he bit it to test it. "I heard it said that this place used to be a prison," he told us. "If so, though the walls are gone it's a prison still." We had to move away, as if intent upon some private business, because the old man showed a disposition to stay with us.

Somerfield and I moralized a while, for the place was the sight of the old Marshalsea prison in which Dickens's father was imprisoned for debt. The dignified house had been the mansion of the governor. It seemed tremendous to us that it lived in literature but had been forgotten by men, so we had much to say about literature as the mind of the race. And while we talked we walked, coming presently to Lant Street, as discouraging a place in which to live as could be imagined, one house exactly like another and all of them flat as a blank wall, each doorway disfigured by a meaningless projecting triangle by way of reminding people that once there were such things as porches, each window frame painted a mud-color brown. But we picked upon one house as that in which Dickens lived as a young man, and in which Bob Sawyer lodged when Mrs. Raddles took in and did for single gentlemen. At many windows sat men and some women, reading their Sunday newspapers, many of the men with their stockinged feet in plain sight on the window sill. But whatever our wanderings we managed to get back to the center of activities for an evening of socialism.

I recall visions of places along the river Thames to which I sometimes rowed in a hired skiff, sometimes paddled in a canoe after riding on my bicycle to a point where interest began. Thus I see the bridge spanning the river at Richmond, the tree-clad rise beyond and the brown barges that lay alongside the towpath. I see it all in my mind's eye, even remember and wonder why I remember, that while I ate my bread and cheese under the elms on the river bank with my feet dangling in the water, thinking of nothing at all but perfectly happy and contented, the noise of a triumphant hen mellowed by distance cut like a scimitar into my mood so that the shadow of a fear passed over me and made me stand self-condemned of indolence. My moment of happiness fled.

Once, while walking in Hyde Park in the early morning, I was hailed by a young man in a dogcart who obviously mastered a spirited horse but not without an air of doubt. "You never can tell what the beast will do next," he shouted to me as he reined to a stop, before he greeted me, and almost before I had recognized him as Victor of Willoughby's school. "Jump up!" he said in his old liberal way—there had always been an air of double-handed generosity about him. I climbed into the seat by his side. He had grown to be one of the square and stocky sort, ruddy of complexion, and not what the world calls good-looking, but full of a cheerful friendliness, and the soul of thorough honesty, too. He seemed to me one with riches, not so much by his clothes as by the auxiliaries of an elaborate necktie with diamond pin, a ring, the smart turnout that he drove, the amber cigar holder he sported. Nor outwardly did I give any hint of straitened circumstances, for it was always my care to go comfortably dressed, and my suit of white flannel with fluttering blue tie would have passed me anywhere.

"Let's go somewhere," said Victor, and turned out through the Marble Arch to head eastward at a smart trot. So we drove, and both awaited the other's explanations.

"Doing anything much?" he asked, then said soothing things to his horse, which seemed to have periods of excitement.

"Messing about in a kind of way," I answered, not in defensive secrecy but because there seemed to be nothing definite to tell.

"So am I," said Victor. "We're all messing about. . . . At home they want me to go into the church. . . . I suppose it's a pretty good thing if you get a good living, and someone in the family has a say about things in a place in Yorkshire. But, good Lord! I'm no more built for that sort of thing than this horse is for a funeral. . . . When you come to think of it none of us ever talked about religion. We didn't at school. We didn't at home. Everyone put it on a rear shelf as taken for granted. And those who did talk about it professionally seemed like insincere sentimentalists. They were, too, to a great extent;

so you felt uncomfortable. Or else sullen. . . . Fact of the matter is that I get my spiritual stock of goods down to a belief that there must be a kind of Something and that's about all. I get it down to something like Willoughby's algebra lessons. You know how he used to say 'Let x equal the Unknown.' Well, I get a kind of equation out of it. God is the Unknown, therefore God equals x. But it's the Unknown raised to Infinity, therefore I put it down as God equals x^n. Well, I couldn't preach a doctrine on x^n, you see. So there you are."

"I give it up," I told him. "As I see it, the greater includes the less; the less can't include the greater. The Finite's less than the Infinite. Man's mind's finite and can't grasp the Infinite. So there you are."

For a while Victor was keenly interested in his horse which seemed intensely impatient and did a vast amount of snorting and high-stepping and slavering, and seemed painfully eager to break into a gallop; but the driver bore himself with dignity.

"I made some unsuccessful experiments in prayer once or twice," said Victor presently. "Testing the matter out. Once in the case of toothache. Once in the case of a sick horse. There were other cases in which the hope and the result met, but then I found myself putting it down to coincidence, not wilfully or in any obstinate way, but naturally. I just couldn't bring myself to believe that I had any real influence, if you understand what I mean. That was the crowning disappointment, my being unmoved or unconvinced because of results where they seemed successful. . . . Yet I keep on saying the Lord's Prayer from a kind of habit formed in childhood just as I part my hair on the left-hand side. But I don't think it. There's the point. I don't think it. It's a mere saying of words, like the Thibetan spinning his prayer wheel. If I do think it, what does it boil down to? Just a desire for Order, and I believe that's all there is to it and that's all there ever was to it."

"It's queer that I came to that sort of conclusion," I said.

"Look at it," Victor went on. "I get the idea of someone trying to think things out. Jesus Christ, you know. He comes to the conclusion that there's a kind of Something outside the world, something to be thoughtfully considered, not treated lightly. So there are your first ten words. A kind of nominative of address, as Willoughby used to say in the grammar lessons. Yet, mind you, there's none of the exaggerated eulogy in it of a kind that men give kings. That's worth noting."

The horse got in some effective protest at this point so Victor dropped high matters until he had prevailed.

"Well, coming down to fundamentals," he went on, "what do we get next? A recognition that there's Order outside of man's sphere. 'Thy will on earth as in heaven.' The sun rises regularly. The moon doesn't whirl in an eccentric way. The stars don't clash. Seasons come regularly as day and night. Very well. All that order is taken to be the law of the Something, the Unknown. So you get the expression of a hope that order will come among men as it is observed in the heavens. And there you are. Let's have order, let's have something to eat, let's get in the mood where we don't fuss about little things, and there you are. That's the Lord's Prayer, as I see it when I think about it. But the Church wraps it up into complexity. Now take horses. This belongs to my uncle who has a place down in Godalming. He has all sorts of animals—horses, cows, ducks, chickens, sheep. Can man behave as they do? Can he keep order as they keep it? No. Let two animals start a quarrel and it's localized. Others leave 'em alone. But man just can't be orderly. A quarrel spreads and spreads like the devil when man commences, everyone jumping in, everyone hunting about to get insulted or to insult by hook or crook, everyone anxious to be violent in speech and action. But with animals it's altogether different. If two start a quarrel it's localized and the rest do not interfere. Two rams start to butt, or two chickens to fight, and they go on until they have enough while the rest feed peaceably. But man's got a natural devilish tendency to disorder. Besides, an animal knows its next duty. . . . If I turn this horse loose it won't hesitate what to do next. But a man never knows. In this book I've been reading . . ."

"What book?" I asked.

"I was going to tell you. *Sartor Resartus*. Carlyle. It drives in the lesson that man's necessary duty is the one that lies nearest. Now that's perfectly simple. It would make for order if followed out. If everyone did the duty nearest, obviously he would be attending to his own business and his own affairs."

I found myself tremendously interested and wishing that he would go on, but for a space the horse occupied him, and when he was again free for higher things the mood had passed.

"One ought to be too proud to be disorderly," was all that he said. "Too proud." A little later, reverting to the subject in an indirect way, he spoke of Cunninghame Graham as a man of true pride. "And the leaders in the socialist movement," he said, "do seem to have an intelligent grasp of the idea of order. But their followers . . . whiners for the most part, with ulterior motives. That's how I see them."

3

The conversation gives a hint of how our minds were occupied with problems. In a way the social structure might well be compared to a lump of baker's dough. Outwardly it presented an unruffled surface, but beneath the thin glabrity an ever-increasing activity went on that was changing the mass. In enthusiastic temper we discussed social and economic relations between labor and capital, exclaimed against things because the vast treasure of science had not enriched the masses, denounced spiritual guides and temporal rulers, deplored the grasping avarice and heartless methods of employers and capitalists. You get the idea of that outward velvetiness and general appearance of concord if you turn over the pages of serious magazines of the time, beginning about 1884, which is a little earlier than the time of which I write. You find in them as you find in the magazines of to-day in the United States very little indeed to disturb the equanimity of those who had the strangle hold on things political and economic. There were literary articles, accounts of travel in India and Asia Minor and Africa, amusing discussions on the happiness of animals, a great deal about armies and navies and national defence; but any student of sociological conditions would be perfectly justified in coming to a conclusion that perfect contentment held all England. Trouble seemed always present in Ireland what with Fenians and no-rent agitation, sporadic in Scotland with crofter troubles, but, except for a few strikes in coal-mine districts, a little discontent among the weavers, a few murders and fires and the explosion of an infernal machine or two, England presented the untroubled face of a dough cake. The first hint of a leaven working underneath was the gospel preached by Henry George and the popularity of his book, *Progress and Poverty*. But Mr. Gladstone reassured the world that England's best and easiest reply to George lay in an address made by the government statistician, setting forth the progress of the working classes in the last century. And Thomas Henry Huxley said of *Progress and Poverty*, "It is more damned nonsense than poor Rousseau's blether."

Henry George, eloquent, modestly self-confident, light-hearted and sanguine and altogether imperturbable, was regarded rather as a nuisance to be easily disposed of in argument, rather than as a disturber of established things. Yet there seemed to be a wisdom and a manliness about his sayings and doings and writings that attracted men. "Think of the popularity of his book," said Huxley to Knowles. George made conquests everywhere. He dared to argue with Herbert Spencer, to debate with Hyndman, to go to Ireland and suffer arrest in the cause of free speech. He dared to beard that terrible constitutional lion, His Grace the Duke of Argyle, who indignantly declared that the George idea of depossession of established land-owners meant nothing but robbery. It was the theory of a thief. George, in short, was not at all respectable.

"But how," asked George, "did the original land-holders become possessed of their holdings?"

"By law," answered his grace, speaking as one with authority for private interests.

"Then tell me how it can be robbery to change a law," demanded George, standing four-square on his firm foundation. So there worked the leaven, and when Henry George returned to America men with reflective minds met together.

It was Henry Mayers Hyndman, a Cambridge University man whose profession was stock-broker, who had been George's host, and Hyndman's star was socialism, his prophet Karl

Marx. Those most active in George's support had been the Christian socialists under the leadership of Stewart Headlam, an ex-artillery officer named Henry Hyde Champion, Edward Carpenter who lived in a sort of Thoreau simplicity, George Bernard Shaw then a free-lance journalist, and James L. Joynes a master of Eton. While George had argued against socialism, his work could have been no more effective had he advocated it. As Shaw pointed out in a letter to Hamlin Garland, when first he became swept into the socialist ranks, he discovered "that five sixths of those who were swept in with me had been converted by Henry George." To be sure there was a Land Nationalization Society, but its methods were quietly studious. The socialists accepted the land policy of Henry George. A noisy and active body, the Social Democratic Federation seemed to be the machine most likely to change social and political conditions, so to it those of us went who had been led to economic thought by a reading of *Progress and Poverty.*

CHAPTER III

Ardent Visions

I

WERE I asked to name the man who exercised most influence over the youths of my acquaintance in those days, it would be neither statesman nor eloquent preacher, philosopher nor professional educator, but Quintin Hogg, the father of Sir Douglas Hogg, now lord chancellor. The means by which that influence became exercised was the Polytechnic, which was no sectarian institution but in all sense of the word a club not at all exclusive, with a side line of educational facilities in the way of night classes, by which young men of ambition might prepare themselves for various trades or professions on which their hearts were set, though circumstances had thrust them into spheres for which they were not fitted by inclination. The Polytechnic, in short, was a door to opportunity. It was an elevation from which it became possible to see new horizons. And the institution was the shadow of its founder. Quintin Hogg was a man chock full of human kindness, a luminous personality, a civilized man of large views and tremendous zeal, of deep and genuine insight and inspiration. He was that rarest of philosophers, a doer and not a mere talker.

I vividly remember the first time I attended a meeting of a group organized for the free discussion of anything and everything. The affair started with an address given by a thoughtful young man named Hopkins, and it had to do with a consideration of the Civil service as a profession. Apparently unpromising as a subject for argument, it turned out to be tremendously provocative, mainly because of the devastating severity of a tall fellow named Peer, so tall that he stooped.

His voice, the rare smile that lighted his face, the rough independence of him all filled me with admiration. He concerned himself not at all about fastidiousness of expression, but delivered real opinions in sledge-hammer style. While the greater number of those who talked manifestly aimed at eloquence, and therefore often spun words without meaning that did little more than darken counsel, and while others were of the apologetic sort that brushed aside or skirted around arguments because of convention, Peer seemed like some strong animal crashing through underbrush, intent on a course and by no means to be turned from it.

He admitted that those who became Civil servants were spoken of with respect as having "got on," but, he said, "You are not in this world to get on, I tell you, you are here to do something worth while. What is getting on, after all? What is it more than the surrendering yourself to an easy life, to the finding of a warm corner in which you can drift to senility like a house cat? What is it but to be a respectable parasite? You get on, how? By a hiding of your real self. By deceit. By flattery more or less veiled. By lying or half-lying. By cheating. By cajolery. You sell your birthright of independence for a mess of pottage. I don't want to get on where getting on means self-surrender, where to be smiled upon by the boss is unalloyed joy, where you fight, if you fight at all, for the continuance of things as they are." He was tremendous, I thought, in his scorn for those whose idea of life was nothing but their own well-being.

Considered as logical argument the discussion that followed might merit the scorn that George Bernard Shaw somewhere pours upon a Polytechnic debate. As an outspoken opinion it had great value. It was a rough-and-tumble affair, one man pursuing one thought, another taking up some special angle that appealed to him and confining himself to that, a third ramblingly sentimental, a fourth going off on some proposition of his own. For me, narrowly circumscribed to fixed ideas, the evening stood out enormously because of that unusual exhibition of faiths and hopes and ambitions. One man cited Tolstoy, and another declared that Tolstoy had nothing but peasant notions. Bill Surrey, my old Bill the knife-boy, astonished me by getting to his feet and somehow wrenching the discussion around to a consideration of the decay of bodily strength among city people, and his readiness of speech left me with a feeling of dismay at my own inability to say anything in public. Bill gave instances, especially one in which he had seen a crowd of railway clerks playing at noon with only one or two able to raise their bodies by the strength of their arms so as to touch a bar with their chins. From that he deduced fearful things concerning the future of the race. People rode too much and were losing the power of locomotion. They were eating too much and drinking too much. "You talk about the way Rome degenerated," he said. "This civilization of ours is degenerating as fast but in another way. They ate too much. You ride too much. One luxury is as bad as another."

"Hear! Hear!" said Peer, and noted down the remark.

That diversion of Bill's opened the way for a brief discussion of the relative merits of athletes ancient and modern; then we were swept, by a rigid young man who wore a bright-red tie, into a consideration of a back-to-the-land movement and that took us into Henry George and *Progress and Poverty;* then we slid into socialism, during which a spectacled gentleman with prominent white shirt-cuffs thought to clinch some obscure argument by quoting:

"What is a communist? One who has his yearnings
For equal division of unequal earnings"—

but failed in his effort, the general trend of opinion being quite otherwise than conservative.

Walking home with my friend Somerfield, a student-architect, I released my soul, telling him that it was as though new and unexpected worlds lay at my right hand and my left, and those I wanted to explore. We fell into confidences. I told him of my quandary, and of how my father in New York hinted at the possibility of getting a solid defined position for me somewhere in Buffalo, through influence. I added that if I did anything of the kind I would stand self-confessed as a parasite, and that every day it became increasingly clear that I must do something for my own sustenance, though it seemed to be a complex piece of business, trying to hire myself out and yet retain my personal independence.

Somerfield stopped under a street lamp and took a book from his pocket. "Funny coincidence. Listen," he said. "This is Carlyle writing to his brother Tom who is talking about emigrating from Scotland to America," and he read this passage: "'You shall never seriously meditate crossing the great Salt Pool to plant yourself in the Yankee-land. That is a miserable fate for anyone, at best; never dream of it. Could you banish yourself from all that is interesting to your mind, forget the history, the glorious institutions, the noble principles of old Scotland that you might eat a better dinner, perhaps?'"

"That's Carlyle, eh?" I asked.

"That's Carlyle," said Somerfield. "And for one interesting thing to be seen in Scotland there are a hundred in England."

"Besides, it looks as if we were headed for revolution," I added, forgetting personal affairs in larger issues.

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But you must not imagine any cut-and-dried ceremony when one joined the socialist organization. Nor may you picture any very hard-and-fast set of principles to which adherence had to be made. The color of the revolutionary movement ran from lightest tints, as in the Christian socialism of the Honorable and Reverend James Adderley, who turned his parish newspaper into a socialist propaganda sheet whereupon it leaped to a circulation of twenty-four thousand, on through the deeper tint of respectable rebellion against machinery, and across to the luridities and deepest red of the Stoke Newington anarchists who talked big about dynamite and thought that the politico-revolutionary tail might be made to wag the dog. You must see socialist activities as carried on in many places, as something like this.

Down in the city, in a street at the end of which the dome of

St. Paul's loomed like a storm cloud, you turned in a doorway and went up two flights of steps. See it, to get the proper color, as a night of fog, throat-tickling and cough-inducing fog that drifted up the stairway, and into the upper chamber through broken window panes, drifted so thickly that the further end of the hall seemed lost in gloom and the chairman who sat at a little table, and also the speaker of the evening, stood on the edge of eternity. Through that haze the gas jets showed yellowish, not lighting the hall as much as standing out each in isolation. To the touch everything was clammy, the seats cold and wet, and the plaster walls which were painted a dun yellow had on them great drops of water which gathered and ran down. Nor was the hall heated, though the November day had been chill; indeed there were no means of heating. So it required courage and enthusiasm to walk weary miles through streets to listen to a lecture in those conditions and that environment. Yet many were there; some of the sort that had confessed utter defeat, mud-stained and hollow-cheeked men, wet and cold and dejected. They were not tramps or vagrants, but for the most part what are called occasional laborers, though some were mechanics out of work. There were others with a flavor of scholarship about them, the sort that affected woolen shirts and flowing ties, and broad-brimmed hats and cloaks, the poetic wing that, by a sort of augustness of tradition, has always repudiated fashion and striven for a heavenly city, some of them being men of ascetic life who proclaimed themselves to be against eating of meat, and against the drinking of wine or beer, indeed against carnality of all kinds, half-dreamers and half-saints. Some were men of ethical zeal and moral enthusiasm, notably among them was Herbert Burroughs, handsome and well-dressed, who wandered strangely between Karl Marx and Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism*. There was John Williams, thick-lipped, and common of appearance, a proletarian indeed, one of a kind to stand shouting on a barricade while guns spat, exultant at the nearness of death. And, in the doorway, offering his poorly printed, blood-thirstily phrased pamphlets, his own work from start to finish, stood the little man Chatterton who knew no fear, a living prototype of the sort that would have cast down their nets in Judea to follow the man of mystic revelation. A starved man he, a man with failing eyes, a man capable of whole-souled loyalty was this Chatterton whose years must have numbered seventy; who as a lad had marched with the Chartists, and, with passing years, had been one of the rioters for cheaper bread when Hyde Park was closed to the demonstraters so that the crowd tore the railings down and swarmed into the enclosure assuring open expression of opinion for all in years to come; who had rioted in Northampton because Bradlaugh was not elected; who had fought side by side with members of the Salvation Army when that body had been attacked by ruffians; who had been arrested by a kind of habit of the police whenever a meeting of unemployed had been held. "This body of mine," he said, in the spirit of the Athenians, "I devote to my country's good," though his eye would light with defiance at sight of a policeman, a soldier or a national flag. Then there was Hubert Bland, perfect in frock coat, and monocle, and high silk hat; and his wife "E. Nesbit," dark-eyed and graceful, a Grecian face framed in an aureole of hair like black silk. In compliment to her the chairman, in opening the meeting, quoted from her poem "All in All":

"When all the night is horrible with clamor
Of voiceless curses darker than the night,
When light of sun there is not, neither starshine,
Now any beacon on the hill of Right,
Shine, O thou Light of Life, upon our pathway—
Freedom, be thou our light!

Then Prince Peter Kropotkin stood up and told us about communist anarchism; its basis and principles, maintaining that there would be no unemployed men were lands not held out of use, that the submission of the individual to the state could never mean advancement, that socialism worked for a centralized capitalism and therefore was not progress but against the tendency of progress, that anarchism should not be considered as a utopian proposal but as one of the modern sociological sciences. It was a philosophic discourse by a man of exceptional gifts and refinement and attainments. Taking out a few words and inserting others, giving it a religious instead of political cast, you might have said that it stood as a plea for that true manhood which is the result of severe and constant discipline, that men become men by study and labor, by observation and reflection, by holding close to the light of reason and giving an ear to the small still voice of duty. It was in effect a plea for discipline of self rather than discipline by rule. And the pleader might have been a priest what with his earnestness, his pure-mindedness, his essential piety. That last expresses the idea. There is no other word for it. He radiated enlightenment. He was a noble character unconscious of his nobility, preaching nobleness. It was a Sermon on the Mount preached to those ready to wrangle about trifles.

Soon John Burns took the floor, that John Burns who presently became a member of Parliament, and a cabinet minister. He was black-bearded, smart, stocky, tough as hickory, nasal in a cockney way, given to knock-out argument in the style of his brother the pugilist, bull-hearted and determined, excellent in many ways and very well aware of the fact; but when he began, we fell to a lower plane. What he said was rumbumptious in part, in part practical. He offered himself as a Danton ready and willing to lead millions in revolt and to die on the scaffold. He was severe and haughty with philosophers, and as he talked it seemed abundantly clear to me that much of what had been said by Kropotkin had passed over his head. "Join the volunteers," he said, "and get a gun free. Then join the Social Democratic Federation and we'll make a noise with a bigger noise to follow. I am as great an anarchist as Kropotkin, but I believe that I can make more noise on the bass drum of social democracy than on the little fife of anarchism." And the applause that followed told of a joyful and generous hope that soon mischief would be afoot.

Then Kropotkin smiled an inscrutable smile and stroked his beard. Next he lightly readjusted his spectacles. "Obviously," he said, "you fail to understand. Or else you favor a policy of expediency to which I cannot adhere, for socialism and anarchism stand poles apart."

3

So there was the beginning. Thereafter, stirring and throbbing within me, something went on and on, something born of the idea that mine had been a muddled view of life and its issues. Man could not live in an enchanted garden with his own comfort and ease his sole care. He must be vivid and active doing what he could to help abolish misery and want, rousing others from their lethargy, giving of himself in unselfishness, telling of hopes and aims, acquiring a fund of accurate and pertinent information, and meanwhile actually knowing by personal contact that life low and sordid and mean which it were well to abolish. In the Polytechnic I discovered companions of my way of thinking, young men of varied walks of life but all animated by a single purpose. Our sentimental sympathy led us to strange adventures, besides the joining of branches of the Social Democratic Federation, and working tremendously in the belief that we were enlightening the proletariat, never guessing that often we were merely affording them cheap and interesting entertainment.

There were, for example, the Whitechapel adventures, to leap ahead in the story. Quite as if some demon thing went abroad at dark, women of the street had been murdered and mutilated, eight or nine of them, sometimes two in a single night, evidently by the same hand. So, partly with the wild hope of being able to do what the police had been unable to do in the way of finding the murderer, and partly to know something of so strange a land, four of us dressed ourselves in old and ragged clothes and battered hats and went forth. One was Somerfield; another Turner who has since become an inventor; the third, Douglas, a youth of all-embracing sympathies, a friend of Victor's, and I made the fourth. Together during those all-night rambles we touched the fringe of a community of such hideousness that they seemed like nightmares. It was festering loathsomeness like the awfulness of a long unburied carcass. Apparition-like, there came before us narrow and dark alleys with high black buildings on both sides, places of indescribable filthiness, and nerve-shattering noise of quarrelings, and once shrill screamings; a place of drabs and drunkards and half-naked children; a place of horrible, misshapen life. Once, a hideous toothless old woman with straggling gray hair accosted us and offered herself; at another time an immature girl-child came leering and inviting, sent by a hulking fellow who watched from a covered alleyway. In my memory there shapes a terror of bedraggled women; a boy outside an eating house fishing from a slop bucket scraps and bones that were plate scrapings; a fearfully laughing drunken girl lying in the mud of a gutter; two black-browed fellows who followed us for a long time until we turned on them; a deafening yelling of "Murder!" as we passed a house with broken windows; a man with a knife lurking in a dark place; haggard faces; a stinking warm air that came from the open door of a penny sleeping place; a woman with streaming eyes who said that her child lay dead with fever; a carter who slashed with his whip at a man; a street fight between gangs with which we had nothing to do but into which we were temporarily swept for self-defence. It was dim doubt and peril that night. It was a monstrous reality of that misery of which we had talked, but of which we knew nothing. Horror and strife and madness seemed to pour from every dark alley, every doorway, every broken window. It was life without hope, without quiet, without kindness. It was the city of prodigious horror and foul corruption.

4

Another time Turner and I put on old clothes, dusty rather than ragged, and walked east to the hop fields of Kent, because the Reverend Stewart Headlam had told us that hopping stood as the only time of recreation for tens of thousands of factory workers. We yearned to see and to preach. For three days we walked, eating wild blackberries and bread and cheese, and drinking good country ale, for we were not without money. I remember vivid pictures of red-brick farmhouses seen at sunrise, feather plumes of smoke rising against the green of the hills, and soft meadows sweeping down to river and pond; of a stream by which we sat for hours in the shade of tall elms, listening to wood pigeons cooing, watching cows and sheep as they came down to drink or to stand idling in the water. At many wayside inns we sat outside on a bench while the innkeeper prepared a meal of tea and country bread and butter, and sometimes a countryman exchanged greetings with us. By a roundabout route we reached the village of Betchworth, coming upon it in such a way that at a bend of the tree-shaded road we caught sight of a high-timbered house richly dressed with climbing plants and rambling roses, with a little family of chickens in the roadway apparently the only living things there. A little farther on, standing against a wall of green, we saw the village church, square-towered and steep-roofed, while to our right there were beeches and cedars and chestnuts in a glory of multi-colored green. The shadowed stillness of the village street did good to eye and heart, so we rested there. Nor did we find that those factory workers who had turned to hopping were in any way like those we had seen in Whitechapel. Sunburned and happy they went about their work, incomprehensively changed to a vivid high-heartedness as if something of the strength and sweetness of mother earth had entered into them.

A place called Elstead, far from the hop fields, where a stone bridge crossed a shallow stream, was a scene of glorious light and warmth and brilliant color; we sat awhile by the water. Presently, whistling as he walked, a boy came over the bridge, and we knew it was no country lad by a certain perkiness about him. Besides there was the tune he whistled, which announced its music-hall origin. Seeing us, for a little while he leaned over the bridge parapet looking down into the water, then made an excuse for conversation by asking us the way to London and so joined us at the water's edge. Soon, like any pilgrim, he began to tell us of the places he had visited, of the authentic information he gathered, of the country folk he had met. Also our missionary zeal led us to question him about his political beliefs. He was shabbily clad in clothes much too large for him, and he wore a celluloid collar and a very ugly tie. On his head was a skimpy cap perched jauntily. Sometimes he referred to himself in the third person, much as if he recognized a dual personality.

"'Op pickin's not bad," he told us, "but you're swindled out of a whole lot of life in the country. No fun. No music 'all to go to. No pawn-shop winder to look at. No bobby to chivvy. No gas lights to look at in the night. . . . Gord! 'Ow they manage to pass their time I don't know. . . . It's just livin' an' nothin' else. Ploddin'. Ploddin' along. I worked it out, how many yards a man would plod behind a plow turnin' up a field. Gimme a city. Gimme a good shoeblack stand. The lights, and people in fine clothes to look at, and cabs an' 'orses, an' men with a drop too much. Fried fish shops. Concerts. Processions. Gimme them. Gimme the streets with soldiers and a sight of the queen, and illumination nights, and a good six-pennyworth at a theater. That's life."

"But there's nothing sincere about that," said Turner.

"Nothin' stoopid neither," returned the shoeblack. "These country people, they're stoopid. Take no end of time to think out an answer to a question. What's the use of bein' sincere if you're miserable about it, is what I want to know."

"They are not miserable or unhappy," said Turner.

"They're both, on'y they got used to it," answered the boy.

"And they have health," Turner went on.

"I'd rather be a bloody consumptive in a city where I could die lookin' at things than a 'ealthy clod-'opper dyin' without seein' anything at all a whole lifetime. I'd get sick of bein' 'ealthy at that rate."

Turner pointed out that there did exist such a thing as human sympathy, that closer bonds of feeling existed in a village where one man's misfortune became the affair of his neighbors so that trouble was not only shared but lightened, and to some extent made non-existent. But the shoeblack failed to see the advantage of that.

"No good," he said. "No bloody good. 'Ere's me livin' in a 'ouse in the Mile End Road. Think I want to be worried 'cause some old woman croaks? Think I want to bother 'cause some block gets out of work? Think I want to worry my 'ead 'cause two gets to fightin' in the room under mine? Not for Jo! You call it lightenin' trouble, I call it makin' it more when you spread it over a crowd. . . . All them slummers comin' down to see how the poor live! Cheek. That's what it is. Cheek. S'pose we went messin' abaht Park Lane seein' 'ow the rich lived! Wouldn't they chuck us? 'T's why I'm there to rotten egg them socialists when they come dahn to tell us what to do and what to think. Bleedin' duties! My bleedin' duty's to look out for meself."

You must understand that we were intensely curious as to the ideas and beliefs of men in the excess of what I have called our missionary zeal. We catechized and inquired. We led to confidences and outspokennesses. We invited strenuous arguments. Whenever it seemed possible we wrenched things around until our subject confessed to his belief in Christianity and then we had him on the hip. For he had to admit either that Christianity and the teachings of Christ could be brought into line with capitalistic economics, or else admit the justice of socialism, if he played the game of argument according to the rules. But sometimes we came croppers, as in this case.

"What do you think of Christ's teachings?" we asked, opening up.

"Look 'ere," came the reply, cutting across what we had to say, "this ain't no Salvation Army meetin'. All you fellows sometime or other get to draggin' in Jesus Christ. You socialists all get to this sort of thing. Makes me sick, it does; fair sick. There's the Salvationists shoutin' 'Behold the Lamb of God!' They got a patent on the way to heaven. There's you socialists with your 'To arms; to arms, ye brave,' and your proletariat and your capitalist. You got a patent way to heaven. There's the bloody liberals with their ''Ome Rule for Ireland.' They got a way to heaven. Every time some of you yells out, we're supposed to jump and flock to your banner. Garn! You socialists'd fix the price of bootblackin'. You'd organize us. You'd license us like a cab driver. Well, we don't want no price fixin' an' we don't want no license an' we don't want no regulation. See? I ain't goin' to flock to no bloody banner. I'm goin' to charge whatever I can get, and the more the man's in good humor the more I gets. A half-drunk swell's worth a tanner. A socialist only gives a penny but ten to one he cleans his own shoes or maybe don't clean 'em at all. If another feller tries to work my pitch I chuck 'im off and make 'im find one of 'is own. That's the way we get 'armony. Anyway, a Christian wouldn't try to take another man's pitch. Nor he wouldn't try to interfere with prices like you. So there ain't no Christians and there ain't no Christianity. An' it's a damn 'ypocrisy draggin' in Jesus Christ by the ears all the time. 'Tain't so much the Bitter Cry of Outcast London as the Bitter Cry of You Who Won't Attend to Your Own Business. . . . Anyone can see you ain't no 'oppers. Tell it by your talk. . . ."

In large magnanimity we suggested beer at the nearest inn, but Jo grunted negatively. "Me mother boozed, bless 'er ole gums!" he told us. "Fell into the Thames and drownded. Me ole man boozed and got a six months' stretch for 'ammering a bobby. That broke up the 'appy 'ome, 'cause the ole man did his job to relieve 'is feelin's when they fished 'er out. So I never troubled the pubs. Drink's no 'elp to a man."

"Do away with the liquor traffic?" said I, hunting for a crack in his individualistic armor.

"Not me," he answered. "Didn't I tell you I often got a tanner for shinin' a feller three sheets in the wind? A proper amount of booze makes a man free-'anded. Ask the newspaper boys. Ask the cabbies. Ask the flower girls in the street. Drink's a depravity, say the teetotalers, another set, by the way, ready to show the way to heaven. Well, what of it? Every man to his own depravity, say I. Come to think of it, 'arf the world either makes a livin' out of depravities or out of fightin' 'em. More'n 'arf. Three quarters maybe. Maybe more. There's one of the reasons I couldn't live in the country. There ain't any depravity to speak of, so I couldn't make a livin'. Now in London, what you might call my lawful business brings in about one pound ten a week. Takin' advantage of depravities, as you say, more'n doubles that. As for sports at prize fights, and races, it's a gold mine then. But try shoeblackin' outside a church or a socialist 'all! Jest try it. It'd open your eyes."

For sometime after that we were interested in the water. We meditated. I thought, with extreme regret, of things I ought to have said in refutation of all those fantastic ideas. The Higher Life, for instance. But people of the higher life would clean their own footwear. In the end I fell back on a socialistic formula and said that what we aimed to do was accomplish an adjustment, "the adjustment of things by which a surplus came to some but an insufficiency to others," was how I put it.

"Jest what I do," said Jo. "Only I do the adjustin', best way I can. Lemme tell you this. People go about afraid they'll be poor. So they are always on the scramble for what they can get. And the scramblin' worries them as a general thing. Let 'em take a glass or two an' they forget that they're afraid. So they loosen up. Next thing you know they're makin' it good for the trade, like. A drink or two puts 'em in the frame o' mind for a few hours like you want 'em to be in all the time. So they get 'arf a loaf, like; which is better'n no bread at all. I'm fer the drink fer other people. But not fer me. The less people there are in any walk of life, the better. If there was only six shoeblacks we'd be livin' like lords. So I don't go round tellin' people to be shoeblacks. Well, the less people there are that don't drink, the better they get on. So I wouldn't go around shuttin' up the pubs. See?"

With the essential fact of Jo's individualism standing out so prominently, further discussion seemed idle. As we walked toward the railway station our intercourse softened to friendliness. We came across a swimming place, so we stripped and swam and dived; naked, social differences vanished. Jo swam splendidly and his diving was positively inspiring.

5

Perhaps the incident I have just related is not important except as an indication of the way in which we strove, might and main, to bring men's minds to our belief. We were somewhat like Hakluyt's Elizabethan seaman in our adventurousness, in our interest in things, in our readiness to attack the enemy anywhere, any time. We did in all truth strive mightily and hope to become. We laid hold of life with both hands and found it interesting, and we had a faith that gave a direction to aim.

If we dreamed dreams they were dreams with substance and we were pregnant with serious purpose. We worked in the spirit of prophets and crusaders. We made every effort to be inspirers. We were full of the enthusiasm of youth.

You must understand that our socialism concerned itself with things other than material and economic. The fault of Sparta in sacrificing philosophy and art and literature to the grossly practical was not our fault, nor were our tendencies strictly material. Our army fought a long and hot battle over an extended plain. There were men in the movement whose hopes were high and whose dreams were splendid. There were men with faith in effort who made vigorous affirmation of the worth of life, and who unselfishly set aside personal ambition for the common good. Some of them came from the midst of comfort to battle like warrior lords: William Morris, Walter Crane, Edward Carpenter, Henry Mayers Hyndman, Brooke Wescott, the old Bishop of Durham, Canon Shuttleworth. Under their guidance and leadership we marched and countermarched, and fought. Therefore, remembering all that, I look with suspicion upon all those self-conscious fellows of to-day who refer contemptuously to the Victorians and their alleged narrowness of aim. And in part this is why. For, looking around me, I see creeping into the daily life exactly those things which we fought against. To specify:

I see a growing tendency to clutter up homes with trash and gewgaws and baubles of tin and glue bought from five-and-ten-cent stores. I see a flood of commonest trash in the way of periodical literature, from the lowest common denominator of reading intelligence in a certain popular weekly up to the stuff fairly well presented but of a sentimentality and shallowness of which the novelist Ouida and Mrs. Braddon were not capable. I see millions patronizing picture shows in which imbecility and vulgarity strive in rivalry, shows not a whit superior to those penny-gaffs of which I have written.

I see young men plastering down their hair with scented oils exactly as the young and middle-aged men we scorned plastered down their hair with bear's grease and oils; and women adorning themselves with bangles and earrings as did the women of 1885;

and social gatherings and card parties where the latest scandals are discussed by way of conversational *pâté de fois gras*, exactly as the Dilke and the Parnell and the Crawford divorces were discussed in the 1880's. Much that we worked hard to clear away has returned to vex us, like weeds; the maudlin sentimentality, both words and music, of popular songs about mournful prisoners, and birds in gilded cages, and pathetic mothers; the argument about the failure of marriage to institute permanent bliss, and trial and companionate marriages; the drink question *ad nauseum;* the limitation of offspring; the rebellion of the younger generation argument; the interest in the deification of criminals; the worry about the commonness of best-sellers.

As to that extended field to which I have referred, and the vision we saw and proclaimed, consider the Arts and Crafts movement and its exhibitions, and what came of them. Imagine four or five well-lighted gracefully decorated, quite harmonious rooms. See them with a cheerful company coming and going. Picture woven stuffs, embroideries of peculiar beauty, engraved wood blocks; treasures from the Cobden-Sanderson bindery, decorative panels by Burne-Jones, examples of illustration by Walter Crane and Celia Levetus and Arthur Gaskin and many more; breath-taking, glass-painted windows, things of hammered iron and brass, silks of flower-beauty from the dye house at Merton Abbey where Morris worked with his men.

I remember talking with Halliday Sparling and another. Oscar Wilde came up at the moment we separated, and I heard him say to Sparling this, about which there seemed to be a rehearsed preparedness, "Socialism is capable of much for Art, but it depends upon the socialist." Then he fell to stroking with his finger tips some hanging stuff of beryl-blue and there seemed to be a femininity in the act, as well as a desire to be noticed as one noticing. But how different the way of William Morris! A man indomitable of spirit, masculine through and through. You might have taken him for a sea pilot what with his blue serge and shirt of wool, and what with his sturdy gate and masterful way. He was magnificent self-sufficiency and manly dignity in a homely guise. He was enjoying, most thoroughly, with the eager zest of youth. Discreetly following him with admiration in his eye, I saw Victor. With him went a tall, bony, thin young fellow with a jib boom of a nose whom Victor introduced to me and Somerfield as Aubrey Beardsley. He did not turn out to be the kind to kindle much emotion because of an absent-minded way and a pale pensiveness about him. I saw, also, Lady Warwick, fair-haired and blue-eyed, vivacity itself, carrying a copy of *Hopes and Fears for Art.* And there were Beatrice Potter and May Morris, both splendid and bright-eyed. Shaw, very hawklike, seemed to be in a hurry. Dr. Gordon Hake, like a thinker changed by age into a saint, sat in a chair in a secluded corner, and Stead hovered near. So you see the crowd as mixed, the main bulk of it people interested in arts and crafts, a suspicion of society of the more intelligent kind, some young ladies gowned in bright blue, girdled at the waist and looking wonderfully attractive without any of the fashionable excrescences at breast and posterior. But the whole must be seasoned with a strong seasoning of socialists. Add a few enterprising art critics, some young men with a wealth of hair and flowing ties, a few journalists; and to finish, a note-taking group of white-cuffed and white-collared and frock-coated men belonging to the furnishing and decorating firms of the West End, their ambition keen on imitation and just-as-good substitutes. An eavesdropper might possibly have heard them attacking the new fad.

6

Out of that and out of lectures grew very much. Morris gave the world a canon that changed all things in the home. It ran, *Have nothing in your home that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful.* Cultured people at the mercy of narrow-visioned commercial purveyors To Her Majesty the Queen at once saw a Polaris and governed themselves accordingly. Soon others followed suit, and a wild casting away of things followed. What tawdry rubbish found its way to the bottom of the sea! In hundreds of thousands of homes a younger generation flung to the winds all the silly hangings that were tacked around the bottoms of beds and hung on mantel shelves, that swathed the legs of armchairs. How they flung away antimacassars, and foot-stools, and wax-flower ornaments with their glass shades, and massive earrings, and Phyllis and Strephons done in wool; how they abolished brass candlesticks from pianos, and brass-headed tacks from furniture; and heavy gilt picture frames that enclosed photographs of papa standing stern and thoughtful holding a book, and mama sweetly smiling a mirthless smile. The photographic folly of the day, satirized much earlier by Lewis Carroll in a Hiawatha parody, is too good to pass without quoting.

First the Governor, the Father;
He suggested velvet curtains
Looped about a massive pillar;
And the corner of the table,
Of a rosewood dining-table,
He would hold a scroll of something,
Hold it firmly in his left hand;
He would keep his right hand buried
(Like Napoleon) in his waistcoat;
He would contemplate the distance
With a look of pensive meaning,
As of ducks that die in tempests.
Grand, heroic was the notion;
Yet the picture failed entirely;
Failed because he moved a little;
Moved because he couldn't help it.

The great Bible with heavy brass clasps, that stood in the middle of the table and contained a family register of births and marriages and deaths—that went. So did the leather-bound family albums, and the cushion-covered books of collected verse known as "the padded poets," and Martin Tupper's *Proverbial Philosophy;* and slippery horsehair chairs and sofas, and bandy gilt-legged tables, and heavy mantel mirrors magnificent as those of a New York saloon, and of a sort that are to-day making an effort to reappear; earrings, and trinkets hung on watch chains, and patent-leather shoes with numberless minute white buttons, and tall white collars and detachable cuffs and imitation shirt fronts; and women's dresses with the posterial luxuriance of a Hottentot.

As it was with house furnishings, so it was with the life intellectual. There too battles were fought and won. The crudities of the Bradlaugh-Besant-Foote atheistic propaganda with all that empty ridicule launched against superstitions was not taken seriously by anyone of intelligence; all that failed to interest or even to evoke comment after the interesting little flurry caused by the ill-advised prosecution of the *Freethinker* for blasphemy had died out. The larger issues, the obligation to do what might be done to abolish misery among men, the growth of a public conscience; these occupied minds to the exclusion of discussions about hell's torments and the opinions of Christian Fathers in the fourth and fifth century. Also there had loomed very large the matter of the existence of customs in London similar to those customs among the Babylonians, of which Herodotus tells, women being offered for sale to the highest bidder. W. T. Stead of the *Pall Mall Gazette* made practical test of the matter, assisted by Bramwell Booth of the Salvation Army, and actually bought a girl aged sixteen, named Eliza Armstrong, from a woman dealer. The experiment, and the trial that followed, lifted the whole question of prostitution out of the narrow sphere of respectability and morality and into that of economics.

Also for the first time England's literature, other than fiction, was made accessible to people of slender means. Routledge, in a series of paper-covered books that sold for sixpence had given the reading world the masterpieces of Sterne and Fielding and Smollett and Defoe, to say nothing of the lighter works of Marryat and Lever and Lover, had indeed pretty well covered the field of worth-while fiction. But Cassell's opened up a new arcanum with their National Library sold at threepence, or sixpence, well bound and well printed, and well edited by Henry Morley. They published Pepys, Shakespeare, Washington Irving, Prescott—essays, poetry, belles-lettres, voyages, history week by week, each volume with a masterly introduction. On omnibuses, in the streets, in trains, outside factories in noon hours men read them. Another enterprising firm of publishers, made enthusiastic by Ernest Rhys, brought out the Camelot Classic series; they sold for twenty-five cents, nor did the volumes issued conflict with the cheaper series. Walt Whitman, Lowell, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Heine, Thoreau, Plutarch, Malory, Epictetus, Aurelius, Emerson, were brought to the many. Another series edited by Havelock Ellis had to do with matters ethnological, ethical and evolutionary. Another firm of publishers produced a Social Science series which sold for fifty cents, each book a perfect manual, some devoted to socialistic studies by Carpenter, and Bax, and Morris, and Hyndman; some dealing with penology; others with crime, drunkenness, suicide, insanity, the labor situation in America, the land question, coöperative marketing and a dozen other subjects equally alive. And W. T. Stead outdid the whole world in inexpensiveness, publishing reprints of the complete poetic works of recognized poets and putting them on the market at a cost of two cents, not in any unheralded way either, but with loud trumpets in the way of letters printed as written by the Queen and Gladstone and Morley, and Salisbury, and a dozen others in the public eye.

As for music and singing of the popular kind, it was like going out of a noisy slum and stepping into some noble forest with sunlight lancing through the green roof, to pass from the imbecilities of the day that were sung in the streets to the noble chants and songs that were made by William Morris for his socialist co-workers. I remember with keenest delight hearing his version of "Down Among the Dead Men" sung by three or four hundred full-throated men not ashamed to let their voices be heard, and doing it with a crispness and rhythmic life rare enough in chance gatherings. There is richness and vivid exuberance in the song.

That kind of thing made me want to live forever. I knew the fullness of life, hearing it. Singing it, I yearned to stand foursquare on the horizon where the watchword was fellowship. And so much did the songs tempt me that I taught some of them to the boys of Mr. Oldham's school, then, finding my efforts circumscribed, and pursuing what seemed to be a brilliant idea, I started an evening class, having lost my position at the railroad office because of propaganda and disloyalty to established institutions. The class was free to all and turned out to be popular. I taught what purported to be the history of music, but the teaching resolved itself into a singing of revolutionary songs such as the "Carmagnole," and "Ça Ira," and Morris's "All for the Cause," besides many high-spirited songs of Burns's, and a revolutionary chant by Edward Carpenter. The unsuspecting vicar, for whom the word socialism bore as sinister a sound as murder or rape, said fair words in his church about the effective training and the way in which such efforts would make for wider, nobler, stronger and more beneficent men and women. And once, after a choir practice, he said complimentary things about the boys' singing of Morris's "March of the Workers," referring to the dignity of labor, and going on to point out the value of culture as a means of separating folk from the noise and tumult of current events. He deplored the way in which men who should know better preached a gospel of discontent, evidently with Hyndman in his mind, who, for him, stood as the Prince of Darkness.

Nor did the man suspect my design to hasten the Day, neither guess the presence of a propagandist in the fold, until he stood outside the school door one evening to listen to a song set to a very rousing tune of my own invention, which the boys were executing with great spirit. An eyewitness afterward testified to me that the vicar listened for a time with solemn patience, slowly shaking his head the while, his brow corrugated and his lower lip out-thrust. Fear-compelling and emphatic were his eyebrows.

The song to which he listened as something bearing a moral taint was an old Chartist song written by Ernest Jones, who suffered two years' imprisonment for his zeal, in 1848. It ran:

We plow and sow, we're so very, very low,
That we delve in the dirty clay;
Till we bless the plain with the golden grain,
And the vale with the fragrant hay.
Our place we know, we're so very, very low,
'Tis down at the landlord's feet;
We're not too low the grain to grow,
But too low the bread to eat.

Down, down we go, we're so very, very low,
To the hell of the deep-sunk mines;
But we gather the proudest gems that glow,
When the crown of the despot shines;
And whene'er he lacks, upon our backs
Fresh loads he deigns to lay;
We're far too low to vote the tax,
But not too low to pay.

We're low, we're low—we're very, very low,
And yet from our fingers glide;
The silken flow and the robes that glow
Round the limbs of the sons of pride;
And what we get and what we give
We know and we do our share;
We're not too low the cloth to weave,
But too low the cloth to wear.

Knowing not of the man outside, the lads sang in good, wholesome vigorous style, and as we attacked the fourth verse the door opened to disclose the vicar, not smiling in his usual way, but become a vast frown. He was a protesting, acrimonious frown that radiated displeasure in a pathetic kind of way. I had an odd sense that he would do dramatic things, as calling on the class to be silent, or withering and crumpling me with indignant eloquence, or perhaps being emphatic with his ivory-handled umbrella. Instead, he laid the umbrella on top of the harmonium where I could regard it as a symbol of Deference Due to Established Things. And, as the boys sang, my mind planned attacks and defences which, mentally outlined, struck me as being brilliant. But for the first time I found an unsuspected amount of dynamite, even regicidal tendencies in the song.

We're low, we're low, we're very, very low,
And yet when the trumpets ring
The thrust of a poor man's arm will go
Through the heart of the proudest king.
We're low, we're low—mere rabble, we know—
We're only the rank and the file;
We're not too low to kill the foe.
But too low to share the spoil.

Doubtless my attack might have carried things off brilliantly had I been the only one planning. But the vicar's brain had not been idle and, *malgré* my bristling forces, he attacked in the rear. Where I had looked for open objection which I had hoped and expected to override by dry insolence, I discovered a large serenity of mood. The frown had vanished. He was benign. And he shattered my plans hopelessly by complimenting the boys.

"It does me good to hear you sing as if you enjoyed it," he said to them. "The tune, to be sure, is not an attractive one. It is rather, er—what shall I say?—formless and commonplace. But I like the spirit. I like the spirit in which you rendered it. We'll pass over the words. 'Too low to share the spoil.' Hm! A horrible thing to say, and happily not true. Poet's license and nothing more. Maudlin sentimentality. However, that is not what I wanted to say. While I listened, comparing, it came to me that your singing of the anthems on Sundays is—let me say—well, it is marred by a certain stiffness. We have a certain aridity. It is an aridity that makes for, well, let me say, futility. Yes. Futility." He delicately pinched the air with his thumb and forefinger to express futility. "I say futility so far as reaching the hearts of the congregation is concerned. . . . But boys must not be kept from play, and it is your hour now, so I shall say no more. But if you will favor me before you go, I'd very much like to hear you sing that robust, patriotic song, "Hearts of Oak." There is a fine sentiment for English boys.

"To honor we call you; as freemen, not slaves,
For who are so free as the sons of the wave?

How much better that than the sentimental and untrue,

"We're low, we're low, we're very, very low.

Englishmen are not low. They are not rabble. That sort of thing is all very well for foreigners, but not for us, who have a tradition,

". . . 'tis to glory we steer,
That prize more than all to an Englishman dear.

The English spirit is that of Drake and Raleigh, and Nelson, and Wellington."

The boys were all nodding agreement by that time, and I cursed his subtlety as I sounded the opening chords, *furioso.*

"Without accompaniment, please," said the vicar, knocking away my last support. So, as they sang, I listened with an affectation of resentful detachment, and when the song came to an end he resumed his benevolent attitude which well became him, and, with right hand upraised and the three middle fingers extended, intoned "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," and the boys chanted a florid "Amen."

7

"It is evident," said the vicar to me, in the abandoned schoolroom, while the recently arrived Mr. Oldham listened in a state of most abject misery, "that you have been interesting yourself in socialism and—wait a minute, please—to some extent advocating it among these boys."

Thus he fired his opening gun and then proceeded to attack in triumph, unattacked in turn not because he did not leave gaping openings or because of argumentative strength, but because of a deep-rooted something in me that made me venerate his years and deplore his robust ignorance born of a circumscribed life. He seemed so nobly serene in his misunderstanding, so pitifully stuffed with maxims, so hopelessly prejudiced, so confident that he stood on star-crowned heights. I found it almost fascinating to watch him build up an enemy in pasteboard armor, tag it "socialism and anarchism," then get to work most valiantly and hew away helmet and breastplate and greaves. His economic state was pitiable and yet was full of humanitarian love. He was so full of unreasoning optimism, so keen to point out that many among his own congregation used part of their wealth and time in the service of their fellow-men, so safe and sound in his idea that labor had to be directed by ability, and ability's reward in the long run was wealth. Then there was his agitated concern because of a fear that I had poisoned young minds, a concern mixed with regret because of that evident advancement in music which enured to the benefit of the school. So he released his soul abundantly and at the end asked me, "Can you deny that perfect Christianity would mean social and economic comfort?" and, while wondering about "perfect Christianity," I saw no harm in granting that much.

Then the much-aggrieved Mr. Oldham opened his mouth and spake. "And what does the vicar do but preach Christianity?" he asked, and his mild eye was appealing as the eye of a gazelle. "Only Sunday before last the sermon was on the text 'Sell all thou 'ast an' give to the poor!'"

I eliminated Mr. Oldham and told the vicar that it was the false ring, the sycophancy of the churches that did the mischief, but stopped because he seemed hurt.

"The perfection that is divine and the rectification of wrongs on earth lie in different spheres," he said gently. "Would you have the Church go into politics? Would you have the Church spend its time over the punishment of a foolish, wicked and miserable man who had done murder? No. The habitual nourishment of the Church must be the Word."

"'Ow true," interjected Mr. Oldham weakly. "'Ow true. But to think I never as much as dreamt of your bringing socialism into the school. I trusted you. Socialism. 'Ow 'orrible!"

The vicar also eliminated Mr. Oldham. "A perfect state implies perfect citizens," he said very authoritatively. "The aim of the Church is toward perfection of the individual. The aim of the socialist is said to be toward a perfect state. But you misguided revolutionists undertake tremendous responsibilities. I find myself able to do very little more than to appeal to conscience. My own life and character give me concern. Every time I step into the pulpit I have to be on guard against hypocrisy and cant. But you people are so cocksure. So very cocksure. The Sermon on the Mount does not imply——"

"But Jesus Christ——" I began, to stop at a silencing gesture.

The vicar leaned forward, a very sincere man, and said, "One moment, please. Are you interested in Jesus as a guide to the Eternal City? Are you really? Or do you merely use His name as—well, let me put it with reverence but bluntly—as a kind of bait to work on the sentimentality and emotions of men? If you do, you are on the edge of that very hypocrisy which I myself have to guard against constantly. However, here is the case in a nutshell. We work at cross purposes. You are touched with socialism and must be a propagandist. Everyone who feels strongly must be a missionary for his cause. I am opposed to socialism. You cannot give up your socialism, though you may grow out of it. Were it not for that missionary zeal, I would be glad to double your emoluments, but as it is——"

"Too bad. Too bad," moaned Mr. Oldham. "If we could only patch it up. We were getting on so comfortably. I'm quite 'eavy 'earted." His manner was that of the pleading advocate. "Too bad that all this should come up just when we're getting on so nice and comfortable. I 'ad 'igh 'opes for another minstrel entertainment and now this socialism spoils everything. . . . I must say never did a musician give greater satisfaction. No nonsense. No long 'air. Only socialism. Too bad altogether." He murmured "too bad altogether" at intervals thereafter in a sort of fading-away fashion.

"We must resign ourselves to resignation," said the vicar, enjoying his minute joke.

"Quite," said I, and suddenly we all seemed to be on a new basis of understanding. The bright-eyed vicar dropped his superiority and was all good will. I saw him as an amiable old gentleman, the sort with an inclination for chatting over a glass of port wine.

"I wonder if we could have tea at the rectory," he said very pleasantly. "We may have points of contact to discover. . . . Books? Pictures? A game of chess or two?"

I told him that chess would be splendid. So for a couple of hours in his pleasant library everything was frank and pleasant, and when we shook hands at parting it was in a manner pure and undefiled, that rare and fine sense of companionship to the fore. We were comfortable, and sympathetic and flexible. At the library door, the vicar had an idea. "By the way," he said: "Only the other day Sir Charles Collins asked me if I knew of anyone at liberty who could undertake a little research work. India's interest in the British ballot box is his particular study.

Statistics on famine mortality, suttee, infanticide and so on. Data for the creation of an agricultural department and all that kind of thing. It would mean some amount of work at the British Museum library. It would be necessary to look into Lord Ripon's administration and legislative policy. If you could? If you would care for it I mean. It would mean occasional occupation."

"I have time," I told him, "but know nothing about India."

"Neither does he," the vicar assured me. "But he will be candidate in the liberal interests and must have a cause, you know."

"There is the cause of the working man," I said, defiant in a mild way.

"Yes. Yes. To be sure," observed the vicar. "But, er—long-distance reform is more—well, reposeful, let me say. At least members of Parliament find it so."

As the vicar talked my mind ran on the thought that eating was an habitual process with me. There was no question in my mind as to ability or otherwise. Youthful courage and sublime self-confidence go hand in hand, are complementary indeed. So it was that I found myself presently in a new occupation and came into contact with men in the public eye, though, like Pepys, I found them much as other men, contenders for wealth and place though wearing a mask of lofty altruism and high endeavor. But it will not be necessary to write about them. Their influence amounted to nothing at all.

CHAPTER IV

A New Horizon Looms

I

IN THOSE days the question of unemployment loomed large and we made the most of the wave of discontent. We gloried over every new shutdown and lockout and strike. In me and in thousands of others, like-minded, were blissful yearnings for the grand smash-up. We had ecstatic visions of a Reign of Terror. So we rounded up unemployed men, not questioning them very narrowly as to their economic condition or their *bona fides*, then paraded them in a straggling way through the streets, without perceptible order or discipline, some of them carrying roughly made banners bearing Biblical texts such as "Thou shalt not steal," and "Rob not the poor because he is poor," and "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn." At first appearance of such processions a couple of mounted policemen emblematic of authority were detailed to ride in the rear, or alongside, but after a time the authorities ceased to trouble themselves, because, instead of augmenting, the crowd generally dwindled after a fatiguing circuit along the Thames Embankment to Trafalgar Square. For me, seeking to play as many games as possible in life, it was all a wonderful romance and a breaking from dreariness, with the political side of it only slightly interesting. There were no perceptible results from the public meetings that were held, nor were any expected, but they quickened the spirit of restlessness. Policemen listened with indifference to tremendous denunciations, but at other times, obedient to orders, they patrolled about among the audience and bade men "Move on!" or warned them with a surly "Mustn't stand 'ere," and sometimes trod on the heels of such as were defiantly slow. That led to small violences of a mild and Pickwickian kind, to thrustings and elbowings, and pushings, and threatenings, with now and then an arrest. The crowd became resentful rather than unruly. Presently the moving-on tactics produced peripatetic orators who made speeches and framed resolutions which were put to the vote, to be carried unanimously by a circumambulating audience. Thus, that valiant clergyman Stewart Headlam, his arm linked in mine, made an eloquent speech that commenced at the place where the imperial yard measure is set into a stone wall near the National Gallery, and ended at the corner of Northumberland Avenue, the while we were surrounded with friends and sympathizers who acted as police buffers and shock absorbers. But for all our propugnative activities there were moments of stress and pressure so that I lost my hat, suffered a torn coat and received a blow that made blood flow from my cheek, at which honorable sign of combat I knew pride and mental serenity. Besides, there stood Henry Hyde Champion, the artillery officer who had resigned from the army to join the socialist ranks, a bold and challenging figure, and I heard him say "Well done!" Then he hailed a hansom, packed us in and we drove off, Headlam and I, I full of emotional fervor, he a musing man almost transfigured and glorified, the fugleman of a better social order. So, outwardly equal as to acts, he was far more courageous than I. He a small man, and not strong, suffered ten times more than I from physical punishment. He suffered for a conviction, while ninety per cent. of my martyrdom came from sheer love of excitement. I realized no danger, therefore no particular effort became necessary to enable me to do what I did. Headlam feared pain very much indeed yet faced bludgeoning. In my circle I could pose and strut as a hero and be regarded as such. In his circle he stood as one disgraced. As we clattered through the streets I saw him turn pale and shrink into his corner, like a man suddenly taken ill, then noticed that he was trembling, so I realized how he suffered and the immensity of his resolution. I knew then that of the pair of us I stood nearer the borderline of cowardice than he, for it was easy for me to have acted as I had done in sight of those whose admiration I sought. Headlam endured that which he feared for impersonal ends.

Conditions grew more vigorous, as at a meeting in Dod Street one Sunday when some eloquent speaker addressed a thousand or more while standing on a wagon which was surrounded by thirty stalwarts with locked arms, under the leadership of Peer. Again and again the police pushed and thrust and elbowed and jostled, and in an extraordinary spirit of passive resistance there were counter pushings and elbowings and jostlings, besides a good deal of jeering and boohing and hooting, while away from the center of activities there came shouted advices as, "'It 'em on the 'ead," "Don't stand any bloody bullyin'," "Bash their faces in," to say nothing of lurid denunciations. Seen from an elevated place it was crudely amusing rather than spectacular, until someone knocked a policeman's helmet off, and then violence set in, for to deprive an Englishman of his head covering is to strike at the root of human endurance. I saw a mighty surging, and then the falling of first one and then a second flaming banner; heard the ringing clash of broken window glass; heard also yelling and cursing; then the crowd opened up and the policemen were marching off with their prisoners. After that the crowd trickled away, melted, as one might say, in an explanatory mood.

"I'd lose me job if I turned up with a black eye," I heard one man say to another.

"Pretty job I'd make trying to get a crib all punched about," said another. "Besides this socialism only thinks of navvies and the like. What about clerks? That's what I want to know."

So on the morrow many of us were up bright and early to be in attendance at the Thames police court where Magistrate Saunders, big and burly and dogmatic and embittered, tried eight captured men and sentenced them to two months' imprisonment, telling them that they were perverted foreigners. Whereupon we hissed, and cried out against him; some of us believing that the revolution's tocsin had sounded, and that the beginning of the end of a crude materialistic civilization had dawned. At last the hour had come, thought I. So I pushed and elbowed, and we all pushed and elbowed, not openly breaking the peace in a court by law established, but artfully annoying, as children are. "Stop yer bloody shovin' about," said a man at my elbow to a policeman. I saw William Morris not two feet away, heard him lustily call out "Shame!" beheld a policeman elbow him, which elbowing he manfully returned, nothing loth, like one of the warriors of his *Glittering Plain*. Thereupon Morris was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct in court, and his accuser a policeman, luridly coloring for the sake of romance, testified to having been violently "punched" in the pit of the stomach, whereupon Morris declared that the officer was unconsciously influenced by his own prepossessions.

"Who are you?" asked the magistrate to Morris as if official identification might conduce to better understanding of the problem under consideration.

"William Morris, of Kelmscott, an artist and literary man, pretty well known, I think, throughout Europe," answered Morris with a challenging shake of his head.

"I suppose, prisoner, you did this accidentally," said the magistrate.

"I did nothing," declared Morris. "I did not strike the man."

"Well," said Mr. Saunders, with magnanimity, "this time I will let you off."

"Let me off!" echoed the poet, indignantly. "From what?"

With prudent wisdom, according to his lights, the magistrate, making a lofty gesture, like a pardoning monarch said, "You may go."

"I don't want to go," retorted the poet hotly.

"Well, you may stay if you like."

"I don't want to stay," said Morris, defying comment, and so turned and left the court, but being outside gave Halliday Sparling money with which to pay the fines assessed against those arrested.

Out of that affair grew the merry play written by Morris, called *Nupkins Awakened*. It was performed in the long hall where I first heard Kropotkin; and Morris, vividly exuberant, acted the imaginary character of Archbishop of Canterbury, doing most excellently, as Shaw put it, "by obliterating humor and intelligence, and presenting his own person to the audience like a lantern with the light blown out," an official absorbed in his own dignity.

2

So there were distant rumblings of low melodious thunder and lightning flashes, though men who had charge of the public trumpets bade the world have no fear of storm, nor trouble itself with doubts and anxieties. But that tranquillity we were determined to disturb, the more because of that widespread unemployment. When Mr. Gladstone told the Commons that unemployment could be nothing but a passing phase we talked about his disarrayed ideas and infantile foolish notions. He was dreaming a sterile dream, we said. He had neither the courage to inquire nor the honesty to reveal, if he knew. All that we said, and much more, while John Burns, still more exacting, went about calling Gladstone "The Grand Old Barrel-organ." But that epithet I resented and for this reason.

One day, walking about the Parliament houses, thinking about the dullness of law-makers and wishing that by some possibility I might come face to face with Gladstone and so give impassioned expression to my inmost thoughts, I saw, walking a little ahead of me, a gentleman who moved with considerable lightness of stride. Now there were glass-panelled divisions and swinging doors in the hall, and, as the man neared a door, I hastened my pace so as to pass through on the swing made by him. But things did not fall out in the way I expected, for the man, hearing my footsteps, held the glass door open for me with old-world courtesy. I turned to thank him and blushed to see that it was Mr. Gladstone. Nor could I discover any surging instinct to release my soul in the way I had intended. There for me, a youth and a nobody, a service had been done with cheerful willingness and a kindly smile. The realization left me with a feeling almost of desolation. I could hardly bring myself to say the words of thanks, so how could I have come to grips with him on the subject of the right of man to employment? I have been glad, ever since, that of some sudden instinct I relieved him of the door and closed it. I would, I told myself, play *épater le bourgeois* to everyone's heart's content, but there were lengths to which I would not go. For there were reverences due. There were traditions. There was a gracious England and there were gracious statesmen, and it would be vulgar insolence to traduce them, ingratitude not to revere them.

However, that page in my sentimental education had nothing to do with the other pages, and when, at a branch meeting of the Social Democratic Federation, Harry Quelch, I think, proposed church parades of the unemployed as a way to attack the ancient strongholds of dogmatic authority I offered my services.

Somebody had discovered that the Chartists of 1839 had attended parish churches by way of registering their dissatisfaction at the position assumed by the clergy. A copy of the *Gentleman's Magazine* was produced and a passage read which told how "having met in the New Market place, to the number of 3,000 or 4,000, at an early hour, they proceeded at half-past nine o'clock, in processional order, six abreast, and in a few minutes filled the church." (Cheers and applause.)

"I move that we do the same," said a youth.

"Is that a motion?" asked the chairman.

"It's a motion," the young man assured him.

"Anyone second it?"

"Me," declared a man in corduroys too modest for prominence, who half rose from his chair and rapidly subsided into it again.

"Any remarks?"

A pause.

"If there's no objection the motion's carried unanimous," said the chairman doing things in a homely and comfortable way. "Make note of it, secretary."

Then Chatterton, the old Chartist, a little censorious because, as he said, he had "dinned that into everyone's ears long ago," told of a parade made by some four hundred to St. Paul's Cathedral, told us how the Chartists had made it a point to give previous notice to the clergy and to choose a text, and how one reverend gentleman had preached to the text of "My house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves," whereupon the Chartists had left the church in a body by way of protest.

Deeply interested I played with the idea of leading a parade mob to the church of my old vicar. That, however, did not come to open expression. But there were other churches visited, at first with full and cautious sense of responsibility, later not so. Significantly we hissed at certain points during the service as when the Eighth Commandment was chanted, because of our adherence to the bold philosophy of Proudhon who had said that property was theft. Also we applauded at the petition "Give us this day our daily bread." And every clergyman who did not openly ally himself with the socialist body we chose to regard as a man full of subtlety and mischief, insincere and false, enemy of righteousness and a perverter of the way; but many who did so ally themselves with Christian socialistic orders we suspected of ulterior motives and awareness as to the buttered side of their bread.

Church parades, however, necessitate early rising and being abroad at an hour when the average townsman enjoys his newspaper and pipe, so it became clear that the excitement would dwindle very soon. But, "Why not St. Paul's?" said John Burns the incorrigibly dramatic, whereupon word went forth for a massing of men. Of that massing I find an account in a couple of diary pages, partly spared by mice and time and circumstance.

MARCH 3, 1887. To St. Paul's to attend the S.D.F.'s church-parade, the day warm and mizzly. Went alone and early to see how things were, and stood by the great doors looking down into the open space. Several posse of mounted police lined up here and there. I had a swift interchange of sensations when I saw the first contingent coming with their flags, and a band playing, "Onward Christian Soldiers," then looked into the cathedral and saw all those magnificent glories of vast spaces and great domed roof and torn battle flags, and heard the organ, and caught sight of dim lights. Conflicting emotions because of a fear that devastating forces might get loose to mar and destroy. It seems not so long ago I attended St. Paul's with the massed choirs of five thousand voices, I taking choir boys of St. Jude's.

By eleven o'clock the cathedral was overflowing, men standing in aisles, some on seats, and a great buzz of subdued talk filling the air. But still bodies of men marching up, filling the square in front, standing their banners against the railings that surround the Queen Anne statue, crowding on to the steps, overflowing into the roadway.

Estimated six thousand present. A crowning triumph, in a way, for socialism; but an uncontrollable force if mischief arises. The cathedral authorities sent out a dean and assistant ministers with thirty choir boys, all in cassocks and surplices, to hold an overflow service on the steps, John Burns and a few of us making a clear space by shouting and elbowing. Burns, with an air of assured confidence, acted as a kind of master of ceremonies and when the service began raised his hat. Instantly off went all hats and caps, as if a thin strata had risen from that packed mass, but the strata sank again.

Burns has the makings of a commander. Looking over that crowd I wondered how it could be turned away, for there was no discipline, no arrangement, no order. No voice could have reached the uttermost edge of it. A sign would have been unheeded. But Burns played master of men. As soon as the short service came to an end, Burns began to roar, in his bull-like voice, "Dare to be a Daniel," the Moody and Sankey song. Then he picked up a red flag and held it aloft as he stood there on the topmost step. Those nearest him took up the song and others joined in. Then Burns began moving forward, a step at a time, and I and others falling in behind, or rather forming a narrow wedge with Burns at the apex. So a movement of the crowd began, a little clearing in front of Burns, a swirling and a forming of a human stream behind, until presently, the movement communicating itself to the mass, a river of men moved across the square and into the roadway, then along the Thames Embankment to Cleopatra's Needle where Burns, Hyndman and Williams mounted the plinth and did what they could in the way of exciting entertainment. After that we melted away. I went on to Manchester Square where I took tea with Somerfield, and afterwards we walked to Dickens' house in Devonshire Terrace where S. put some finishing touches on a sketch he had made and promised to give me.

Some time during the evening Somerfield's mother, a gentle little lady who might have stepped out of the pages of Jane Austen, told us how we were all silly and confused, and that the proper duty of a patriot is to support the institutions that are educational, such as the family and the school and the church. Terribly old fashioned. Age and years could never bring any of *us* to that point of view.

3

"A glass of sherry?" said E. Printer, and pushed the decanter across the table. He lit a cigar and puffed awhile, meditative.

"I happened to see your article in the *Echo* last night. Anarchism. *An*, without. *Archos*, law. Good. I understand that of course. But you quote this Bakunin, the Russian Nihilist and founder of anarchism. You quote him as saying, 'If God is, man is a slave. But man shall and must be free, therefore God does not exist,' which is nonsense. Why the gratuitous assumption that man is and must be, or should be, or ought to be free? That's what I want to know. How can he be with all those hampering limitations—antecedents—links with remote ancestors—biological influences chemical and physical and all that—predisposing influences. Or take Spencer's Unknowable and the cosmos evolutionary idea with all things potential in the primal mist. . . . Look here. Epigrams about things that count are nonsense. . . . (I hope it doesn't annoy you.) Epigrams are like conjurer's tricks. What appears to be isn't so, but you get a shock. That sort of thing."

"That is to say——?" said I, seeking further enlightenment.

"That is to say that a large proportion of you fellows engaged in the business of reform may start in a well-meaning way, but you soon turn out to be word jugglers. At least you orators do. They itch for logomachies. They rant, sermonize, harangue, jabber. They get a passion for psittacisms. They get *flux de bouche*. That and a leaning to interminable wranglings among themselves."

"You overlook the educational effort that is necessary," I managed to interpolate, after a pause of attentive consideration.

Suddenly Printer became tremendously serious.

"Listen," he said. "Either your proletarian doesn't suffer at all. Or else if he suffers he enjoys doing so. Like martyrs. Or else he is too cowardly to lift a finger in his own defence. There's no other way. Your orators shout Liberty and all that, but, dammit, the word's a mere shibboleth. If the game of the capitalist is annexation, then it's pretty clear that the exploited take the robbery of themselves without resistance. There are neither Wat Tylers, nor Jack Cades, nor John Balls. Instead there are whiners and seventh-rate Demosthenes and a little handful of sincere men concerned with the idealogical aspect of human nature. You talk about storm clouds, but I tell you that at the first thunderclap of riot your red-flag wavers would scurry to shelter. And if there should be a riot, the rioters would be, not your shouters for liberty, but thieves and looters and mischief lovers. The disturbance would not be for Liberty but for License. The anti-social forces would be afoot. But the bold deeds would be done by criminals, not by people who shout for freedom and whine about their conditions."

"Wait awhile," I said, seeing how he had bolted with me, feeling too that he was persuading me.

"I shall not wait," he retorted, and I collapsed in helplessness. "There is half-starvation. There is misery. There is pauperism. Granted. There always have been. These make for the cringing attitude, not for deeds of derring do, take it from me. The man of spirit who finds himself in a tight place will fight out of it by WHAT? By persistence. By keen-eyed attention to his own affairs. By exercise of the old-fashioned virtues of honesty and diligence and patience. If he hates misery he won't herd with the miserables. He'll gradually modify his condition. He won't flaunt his misery but hide it. His personal pride and ambition will outweigh a thousand times his enthusiasm for humanity. Put that in your pipe and smoke it, my boy. . . . But if you don't mind we'll not argue." With something almost approaching the vindictive, he added, "But speeches with cheers—Good Lord! And snivel. Damn!"

"I maintain——" I began, then stopped because of a fear that I might be guilty of what Printer had called *flux de bouche.* Full of a tremendous desire that Printer should understand I tried a new tack. "Why not come to an unemployed meeting and see for yourself," I said. "I think you'll see a patient and sensible side of it."

"If I find really good haters, as old Johnson used to say, I'll be glad. I'll go. But, take it from me, physical man, they tell us, is eighty per cent. water, and intellectual man is eighty per cent. emotion and sentimentality. Don't forget that. He's pretty near blind to every other fact in the universe other than his own feelings. What can you expect from water and sentimentality?"

"Wait till the revolution," I said, darkly.

"Revolution fiddlesticks! Smug respectability's in the bones of every Englishman and every American. That's why they can't revolt. It wouldn't be respectable. Don't fool yourself. All that bombast and drivel of your speech-makers amounts to nothing at all, except they got an army of criminals turned loose. There won't be any revolution with Shaw established as Lord High Philosopher, and Hyndman President, and Belfort Bax Chief Justice. Now Russia, with no notion of respectability, might revolt. But England or America, never, never, never. Especially America. It's the result of runaways from poverty and all sorts of things."

"The Anglo-Saxon revolted in 1770 something," said I. "Battle of Bunker Hill."

"Don't quote that to me," Printer shot back. "Old Johnson had the right light on that. Fools led by scoundrels. Samuel Adams a thriftless failure and a shabby rascal who let people take up a collection of clothes and money for him. A bombastic rhetorician. The Boston Massacre as it is called, nothing but a piece of hooliganism growing out of a fist fight. Everybody smuggling to avoid custom duties. A mob sacking Governor Hutchinson's house and burning his library and smashing his pictures and tearing up his fruit trees. Call that patriotism? Tarring and feathering quiet men. No wonder old Johnson roared against and wrote against the patriots. John Hancock made a large fortune out of smuggling. And how did these patriots support the real patriot Washington when the pinch came? Did they stick by him at Valley Forge? No. Even by drafting he never got 25,000. They were fine enough with their talk about dying in the last ditch for freedom, but dodged the issue when the time came. And Washington had to raid wagons laden with provisions for the loyalist troops. No, my boy. Your Anglo-Saxon's no revolutionist. He's too steeped in self-interest. He's too thoroughly imbued with the idea of respectability. He's been too thoroughly trained in obedience. He wants an easy life, not a glorious death. Put that in your diary and ponder it."

"Well, wait till you see the unemployed meeting," I said.

"Take another glass of sherry and let's talk about something else," suggested Printer. "Here's luck!"

4

The unemployed meeting to which we went turned out to be a twin one, for the Fair Trade League men were holding forth from one stone platform between the lions of the Nelson column, the Social Democratic Federation from another. And as a man leaning over the parapet, who smelt very strongly of fish, said to us when we paused to look down, "There's a lot of bloody shovin' about." There seemed to be a confusion of motives, for men were wandering from one group to another, and it was clear that the orators were in contest for supremacy.

"Rival panaceas," said E. Printer. "Let's take Hyndman, Champion and Company's way."

John Burns, superlative, held a red flag. Hyndman wore his frock coat, gloves and silk hat. Champion as usual was the soldier with a handsomeness of carriage about him. While Williams talked Burns interjected remarks, sarcastic as to ruling powers, uncomplimentary as to his audience for he called them "fellow niggers," encouraging to the trouble-hunters for he referred to "bread or lead," wrathfully as to the listening police for he called them "panderers to the plutocrat" or something similar. It was all very noisy, hortatory, crowded, exciting and familiar, so we, being at the edge of the crowd, found a way to a clearer space and went round the edge of the opposition meeting where a man named Peters was offering to sacrifice his life if free trade could be abandoned. Then, to quote from my diary:

> . . . . a roar went up from the crowd we had left, of, "On to Hyde Park! On to Hyde Park!" and at once there was a general movement towards Pall Mall, so Printer ran, I at his heels, to see what new thing could be afoot. . . . There were little rushes of men down from the pavement in front of the National Gallery. Then, without warning, the crowd left the fair trade meeting and joined the other and more active one. I saw Burns with his red flag, but Hyndman seemed to have some difficulty getting down from the plinth. He looked like a very benevolent gentleman in trouble being helped by strangers who were in a hurry to be somewhere else.

The diary breaks off there and instead of first-class record an account of subsequent proceedings at the Old Bailey had been pasted on the page, but time has played havoc with the clipping.

Now I do not say that E. Printer started the trouble that followed, but I do record facts as I saw them, though there were many happenings I did not see. Naturally, being with Printer, my attention became focussed on him and his doings. And there is this. When the moving crowd reached the Reform Club, there appeared at some of the upper windows a few club servants and lackeys who jeered at the paraders. But it did not stop at jeering, nor did the mockery stay confined to underlings. At one window a well-dressed man beat time, in a way suggestive of insult, to the music of a couple of fifes played by paraders. That challenge called for counter challenges and the mob in the street slackened its pace. One man climbed a lamp post and, perched insecurely on the ladder rest, began a harangue. Then the club servants and lackeys in the hobble-de-hoy age commenced to throw things, cigar stubs, brushes, paper crushed to a ball. One fellow, more daring or more thoughtless than his associates, emptied a pitcher of water out of the window and, doubtless in carelessness or clumsiness, dropped the pitcher which crashed in pieces when it struck the window ledge. But a piece of the broken china caught Printer on the forehead and made a skin cut, painful but not serious. Full of sudden anger, Printer raised his walking stick and hurled it with a fine swing of the arm. Up it went, true to its mark, twirling as it rose, the ferrule of it taking the window glass lance-fashion, and the pane shattered and fell. Then some of the crowd set up an exultant roar. One shouted, "Let 'em have it!" and a light shower of stones began to play on the building, though not so many of them, for what were thrown had to be dug from the macadamized road. But the gesture was enough. Before a quarter of a minute the club doors were closed and every face had disappeared from the windows. The mob had won its first victory and, partly satisfied, partly astonished at its own act, moved onward, sluggishly it seemed to me who looked down from the stone steps of the club.

But a little further on, at the University Club, there were new and more terrifying evidences of the mob's energy. Some road-work being in progress there were heaps of broken granite stones, egg-sized, which offered temptation not to be resisted. The timidity that marked the first attack had entirely vanished. The stones thrown were larger, the launching of them more vicious, the deliberateness of aim more marked. The jeering and booing of the mob had passed into execrations and vicious laughter at mischief accomplished. But there were no attempts at personal violence. Well-dressed people of the kind that frequent Pall Mall, seeing the mob, either made their way through it or sought the safety of doorways and side streets. The appetite for mischief found relief in nothing more than window smashing and a good crash of glass brought forth roars of applause. It was hoodlumism rather than malevolence, ruffianism rather than riot. The spirit of the mob was that of a naughty child with a feeble impulse to destruction that, unchecked, passed to a degree of elaboration. Because of the ingrained respect for authority and tradition which Printer had called "care for Respectability," a couple of dozen unarmed policemen could have stayed things as the word of a determined parent stays the wilful child. But those were days before telephones, and policemen in Pall Mall were not numerous. So, with authority nowhere in sight, the mob developed its conscious ego. Its customary diffidence passed into self-confidence, or something very much like it. But it soon evolved into maniacal violence, launching into excesses with impunity, against property but not against persons in any direct way.

In Piccadilly and South Audley Street store windows were broken and there were mad rushes. I saw men running into shops, flinging clothes and furniture out into the street. Men swarmed through broken panes, heedless of the jagged glass, and scooped up jewelry and watches. A man in corduroys, yelling with delight, rushed past me carrying an ormolu clock. Another I saw was dressing himself in new trousers while wearing an opera hat on the back of his head. But others seemed to find satisfaction in throwing things about, pitching valuables through windows among the crowd with a sort of astonishing liberality.

Once I became aware of a great shouting in South Audley Street, so worked my way through the thick of the crowd to the center of excitement and there I beheld Printer fighting furiously near a brougham with two horses. He was bloodstained and torn, his shirt had been torn away at the neck and he grasped a carriage whip with which he laid about him savagely. I saw a fellow with a knife trying to cut the leather traces, and inside the carriage were two women, very non-resistant, very terrified and shrinking. But I got there and struck the man with the knife who went down as if his legs had no strength, then saw him crawl away. The encounter was over in ten seconds. Printer brought down the handle of the whip on the head of a man who seemed to be trying to wrench open the door of the carriage, a fellow so miserable in clothes too large for him that a pity came over me when I saw him stagger back, then fall. What unaccountable impulse took the coachman cannot be guessed, but he jumped down and disappeared when a man who flourished a stick came up. After that there was a great deal of pushing and thrusting, and a tremendous deal of shouting. I have a vivid impression of running to the horses' heads to soothe them, of a violent blow received on my shoulder, of a renewed shouting, then the crowd flowed onward and away with running people following. So I mounted the coachman's box and drove into a side street, not without difficulty because of the press of the crowd, then became aware again of Printer, very disheveled and stern. I was conscious of nothing within myself but a kind of astonishment and felt a little like a hypocrite at the praise of Printer who kept on saying, "Well done! Well done!" In the midst of that hazy whirl the coachman appeared, full of explanations that did not explain, so I climbed down to find the ladies white but composed, and the carriage the center of a knot of people indignant against rioters. I remember one of the ladies saying something to me, thanking me and expressing a hope that I was not hurt, at which I put my hand to my face and discovered blood, then exploring found a cut that gave no pain. It seemed to me that they all made far too much fuss, but things were not quite clear. I was a little dazed, a little shocked too to see the sad state of Printer so torn and dirty and blood-stained. The noise I heard came to me in a kind of echo. Not until the next day did I remember that the younger of the ladies had given me a piece of paper which I supposed contained an address, or something of the kind. I must have taken it mechanically and put it away, as one sometimes does a railroad ticket, forgetting the incident immediately. But in my right-hand coat pocket I came upon the folded paper and discovered two five-pound Bank of England notes. For a little while I thought they had been given me in error and would be advertised for. So I laid them away for future developments.

The aftermath of the popular excitement was a Mansion House Relief Fund for Unemployment, and the equivalent of a sum of $370,000 was sent by sympathizers and others to the Lord Mayor of London. Newspapers favoring a pernicious sensationalism, which flourished then as now, came out with startling editorials about armed revolt, and about militant socialists marching on London, and very much about revolutionary plots. Aristocratic blatherskites, no less childish than the proletarian blatherskites, talked big about arming their retainers and organizing defence leagues. On the other hand, Champion and Burns lost their poise and broke out into egregious nonsense about beheading enemies of the cause, and setting up a public guillotine in Trafalgar Square. So, judging from the spokesmen, both sides grew harder and more unrelenting and there was more joy in Fleet Street over one silly speech about physical force than in ninety and nine intelligent sayings advocating constructive measures. Shallowness and crudity ruled in editorial offices and ignorance had charge of the public trumpets. In pulpits men strove to inspire their congregations with a harsh and bitter zeal, and the general effort seemed to be bent toward an unsympathetic temper, toward the firm establishment of class prejudice, toward an acrimonious wrangling about trifles.

Something official seeming necessary, in addition to the imprisonment of the few luckless hooligans captured by the police, Hyndman, Burns, Champion and Williams were indicted and put on trial at the Old Bailey, but, nothing more than speech-making being proved against them, they were acquitted.

But the leaven was working and there were other conflicts and outbreaks; a strike in Leicester followed by the destruction of factories, riots of coal miners, a riot at a race track that had nothing at all to do with politics, in the course of which grandstand and outhouses were burned to the ground. Taking one thing with another, we felt assured that the social revolution stood on the threshold and looked for the stampede of entrenched authority at any hour. We stored our minds with facts about the French Revolution, and the Paris Commune, and the Chartist movement. Especially we kept an eye on the United States where significant things seemed to be afoot: the financial embarrassment of General Grant, for example, which struck us as a something to cause sans-culottism to rejoice; the rioting in Chicago for the establishment of an eight-hour day which seemed to foreshadow a new Bastille business; the arrest of Herr Most the anarchist, an affair that looked to us like Danton's; the Milwaukee riot in which ten were killed and more than a hundred wounded, so much resembling that business of the Rue St. Antoine; the strike of Ohio miners in the Hocking Valley district, so clearly paralleling that sorry business at Montmartre. Burning to become pamphleteer, I set to work furiously to translate, from the French, Elisée Reclus's *Workingmen Seize the Machines*, and also spent some of my savings in the purchase of Kropotkin's "Appeal to the Young," copies of which pamphlet I presented to policemen, those on night duty by preference, because, being lonely men, it was easily possible to get into conversation with them after theater time, subtly leading the talk from innocent and unsuspicious beginnings by devious ways, according to the chosen subject's intellectual grasp, on to high places and an atmosphere of political idealism. At the slightest hint of disinterested sympathy with those in poverty, or with those out of work, he would become possessed of a pamphlet. My friend Victor tackled soldiers, but his efforts were truncated somewhat because of the bugle call from barracks that took his subjects away, often at critical points.

But of affairs in the United States, that excitement growing out of the Haymarket affair, and the condemning to death or imprisonment of Parsons, Field, Engel, Fischer, Neebe, Schwab, Spies and Lingg most occupied us. And, far-fetched as it may seem, it is the truth that because of my interest in the Chicago anarchists I came to be tremendously interested in Elizabethan England and the writings of Joseph Conrad.

This was the way of it.

5

Down in Tottenham Court Road, on the right-hand side as you walk south, there used to be a coffee shop much favored by us of the forward movement, much as Garroway's was patronized by merchants in the days of Addison, or the Cheshire Cheese by Johnson, or Two Crowns and Cushion by Fielding's politicians. It was a clean place with sanded floor, and tables with high-backed seats, and oak-paneled walls, and a portly white-aproned proprietor who knew his regular customers by name and professed a disinterested enthusiasm for all causes and sundry.

"There's a great deal to be said for it," he would observe, whether the expounder of a faith stood for socialism, or anarchism, or communism, or spiritualism, or a flat earth, or radicalism, or teetotalism, or vegetarianism, or theosophy, or plain and unadulterated Salvation Army propagandism. His sympathies were everywhere and all causes commended themselves to him. You might say that he was entirely modest and without conceit, one refusing to impose prejudices or preferences, and of comprehensive, intellectual curiosity.

"And how is the socialism going, gentlemen?" he asked, as four of us disposed ourselves at our favorite table. Then he proclaimed himself a passionate lover of eloquence. "To hear you socialists talk does my 'eart good," he told us. He deplored the fact that he could not express himself logically, forcibly, or to the point; that his presence was not commanding; that his literary culture was defective. "It's that I'm not blessed with the gift of the gab, so to say. My figger's not the sort. Some is though. Take that Cunin'em Gra'um; what with his appearance 'e'd get attention if he only told the audience it was a fine day. There is some like that. But not me." He swept his hands apart to indicate a lack of personal dignity, then went on, "Then about ideas. I got things in my 'eart, but can't express it. But there's a whole lot to be said for socialism. 'Eroic patriots all of 'em. There's that 'Yndman. A heart tender as a woman's. Red flag an' all that, yet wouldn't hurt a baby, as I told Mrs. Linn." He fell to the narrower circle of private interests. "What will you 'ave, gentlemen? The coffee never was better'n it is to-night. Steak and mushrooms? Or 'ow about pork chops? Buttered crumpets is good too. There's as good a joint of roast beef as ever walked on four legs, with gravy fit for the Prince of Wales. Or what do you say to a nice veal and 'am cut? Or a pork pie? Or a cut of 'am an' tongue? Eggs is fresh. What's better'n new-laid duck egg boiled? Stewed eels in a jiffy if you want 'em. A man's got to eat if he's busy doin' things, savin' the country as you might say. It does my 'eart good to see so many saviors patronizing my shop, as I told Mrs. Linn many's the time. . . . An' the pamphlets they leave about! Lord! . . . Not that I've 'ad time to read 'em. But some day I'll take a go at 'em, just to get an insight into things. . . . Mary, take the gentlemen's orders."

So Mary brought cold pork pie and toast and coffee to those of us who were carnivorous, buttered crumpets to Peer and Somerfield who were vegetarians, and with joy and gladness we discussed as we ate, denouncing capital as the supreme tyrant. Presently we became aware of a face looking over the back of our seat, a gloomy and saturnine face, resting on clasped hands, and surmounted by a brigandish hat. The face opened its mouth and taught us saying that socialism was a delusion and a snare and men should battle for higher things, should engage in intenser conflicts, should shape the destinies of mankind by deeds of violence. Then the face lifted to disclose a lean unshaven neck and a shirt unbuttoned at the top, and after that one of the hands disappeared to reappear with a thin journal which it dropped on to our table. So we looked and saw a paper called the *Anarchist*, red of cover with the picture of a blazing bomb in the center, underneath which were these words in bold script type:

War to the Death, should be your cry;
Death to all Partners in their Guilt.
Could you but only hate as I,
The blood of all were quickly spilt. . . .

whereupon we recognized one of the Stoke Newington anarchists, professedly of the deed, who opposed all reform, economic and political, on a broad philosophical maxim of The Worse the Better.

Being invited, he came to our table and we saw a youngish man who may have been thirty years of age. He had on a suit of black that showed white at the seams and shiny otherwhere but looked as though he had outgrown it, for his wrists showed, and the trousers, sadly fringed from wear, were too short at the feet. His eyes were the eyes of an enthusiast, bright and shining. He stooped a little as he stood, and when we spoke of his taking coffee with us he thrust his hands into his coat pockets to show how they came through the lining, from which we understood that he had no money, but we saw to it that his financial condition made no difference.

And how he talked.

Hearing him you would have said that his whole life's study had been devoted to anarchism. His manner was that of a man in possession of truth and determined to voice it regardless of protest. He was a startlingly vivid man full of a belief that the state and its governors were nothing but hampering limitations to individual progress, so those limitations he proposed to destroy, also to encourage others to destroy. Listening, one hardly knew whether to smile or to weep. The supreme law was self-interest, he held. Over and over again he repeated with emphasis, "Self-interest is the supreme law for man." "Hands off" stood as his battle cry, and because the state compressed him at every point he declared war on the state.

"But what would you do?" I asked. "How war on the state?"

He answered with the expressive word, "Dynamite," and I felt uneasy, a little fearing that the man might be an *agent pro-*

vocateur; a little fearful that if he was not, mischievous eavesdroppers might swoop down upon us. Almost as one who read thoughts he said, "And don't think I'm any paid wretch either. I want to die as did Codrus when the Heraclidæ invaded Attica, fighting the enemy. I would die as did the Donatists, bearing sure death in my hands to deal it to those who called themselves their masters." Then he quoted, "'If the disease be not only incurable, but also full of continual pain and anguish, making life a torment, the sufferer is justified in taking his life,'" and after a pause he added, "The disease of civilization may be both, but by taking someone with me I shall mitigate the disease by just that much."

"And your quotation?" I asked.

"More's *Utopia*," he responded, and thus presently we came to matter concerning books and reading.

"To blow up the Bank of England would make a noise over all the world of commerce," he said, reflectively.

"Greenwich Observatory would stir up the world geographical," said Turner, humoring him and kicking my leg under the table.

"Greenwich Observatory is a good idea," said the anarchist soberly. "That might be done without any accusation of vindictiveness." Then he took from his pockets some newspaper clippings and fingered them awhile. "The sacred obligation of physical force is taking root in Chicago. Listen." He proceeded to read, impressively, explaining, "This is from Parson's paper, *The Alarm*. Date, October 18, 1884." He looked to assure himself of our attention.

> "One man, armed with a dynamite bomb, is equal to a regiment of militia, when it is used at the right time and place. Anarchists are of the opinion that the bayonet and Gatling gun will cut but a sorry figure in the social revolution.

This is from November, same year.

> "How can all this be done? Simply by making ourselves masters of the use of dynamite, then declaring that we will make no further claim to ownership in anything, and deny every other person's right

> to be the owner of everything, and administer instant death by any and all means to any and every person who attempts to continue to claim personal ownership in anything. This method, and this alone, can relieve the world of this infernal master called the right of property. Our war is not against man, but against systems. Yet we must prepare to kill men who try to defeat our cause, or we strive in vain.

Again:

> "Dynamite! Of all the good stuff, this is the stuff. Stuff several pounds of this sublime stuff into an inch pipe (gas or water), plug up both ends; insert a cap with a fuse attached, place this in the immediate neighborhood of a lot of rich loafers who live by the sweat of other people's brows, and light the fuse. A most cheerful and gratifying result will follow. A pound of this good stuff beats a bushel of ballots all hollow, and don't you forget it.

And this was printed two weeks before the Haymarket gesture, also in *The Alarm*,

> "The moment the abolition of government is suggested, the mind pictures the uprising of a hundred little despotic governments on every hand quarreling among themselves, and domineering the unorganized people. The fact suggests the idea that the present government must be destroyed only in a manner that will prevent the organization or rise of other governments. No government can exist without a head, and by assassinating the head just as fast as a government head appears, the government itself can be destroyed, and all other governments kept out of existence. Assassination will remove the evil from the face of the earth. Assassination, properly applied, is wise, just, humane and brave.

That," he explained, "is evidence of what I call the sacred obligation of preached physical force." I have seen exactly the same triumphant light in the eyes of leaders of religious movements. But we were uncomfortable, so there fell a silence among us.

During the silence the idea dawned upon me that the man had been crazed from overmuch study, because there had been other references to literary subjects in his talk of which I have given the merest outlines.

"You spoke of 'a sudden leap to perfection' in England's hist——" I began, when he interrupted, and thereafter we listened until the small morning hours, buying and drinking coffee to justify our continued stay.

"Elizabethan England," he said, and added, "such another epoch will never occur until we crawling mites on this rolling ball discover the socket it rolls in and again feel ourselves masters of all knowledge and devoid of all doubts."

That was the beginning of a discourse on literature the like of which it has never since been my fortune to hear. He sketched an England altogether different from the England I had imagined. It was a country, he told us, in which a farmer would have thought his gains very small if he failed to have at the end of his term of rental six or seven years of rent laid by, with pewter in his cupboard, and feather beds, and carpets and tapestries, to say nothing of beer and wine. And there was no poverty, except the wilful wastrel of such vagabonds as rufflers, and priggers, and palliards, and whipjacks, and swaddlers, and bawdy-baskets, and morts and doxies and dells; then men fared forth over seas with Raleigh and Hawkins and Cavendish and Drake, all confident that they should upbuild their individual power. Intellectual culture, he showed us, flourished as never before or since. He painted a picture of a sweeping creative wave, first an advancing body proudly moving, Peele and Marlowe and Greene and Lodge and Kyd followed by a greater wave made by Beaumont and Massinger and Webster and Jonson and Dekker with Shakespeare cresting it; then other waves coming after, and he named names. He told us of an England that knew fifty-six sorts of wine, noted, as he expressed it, "for strength and valor"; besides thirty kinds of foreign wines. And in that time of towering supremacy England escaped being seized with that lust for gold which ruined Spain as it had ruined Rome. Hearing all of that one of us said that he ought to put it into a book to the end that England might know herself.

"Which I have done," he said, and produced the volume, one of the Camelot series, entitled *Elizabethan England.* So thereafter I hungered and thirsted for knowledge of those days, and believed, as he taught, that with repressive laws that came with the Cromwellians, much that tended to exalt and refine and enrich human life became dwarfed and prevented.

And as to the after-history of Lothrop Withington, for that was his name, there is this, which I have been told is true. A few years later the anarchists of the deed in England and France and Spain put their ideas into practice, and one, attempting to blow up Greenwich Observatory, stumbled over a tree root and so vanished. The incident was used by Conrad in his *Secret Agent*, but the identity of the man who thus disappeared was not known to the authorities. A friend told me that the man was undoubtedly Lothrop Withington and the information may be correct, because the man had been known up to that time and his dropping out of sight coincided with the attempt on the Observatory.

Withington and I met often, after the coffee-house encounter, to talk about Elizabethan England, and from him I learned much about such romantic rascals as Thomas Lodge the pirating poet and dramatist who gave Shakespeare *Rosalind* and the play woven about her; about the pirate Lord George Cumberland who wore queen Elizabeth's glove and carried it like a plume; about pirates who were prize fighters, and who had a religious streak, and who were both capable and bloodthirsty, and who made discoveries of new lands, and much more. Withington, indeed, touched a spring that presently made me write books about highwaymen, and bushrangers, and romantic rascals. With him I went to strange meetings in cellars and upper rooms where men talked and threatened and were lugubrious, to some place under a shop where Frank Harris held forth, and to a place where two youths were experimenting with dynamite, but, lacking chemical knowledge, made nothing more than foul stinks; and, most notable of all, to a great meeting where many gathered to protest against the hanging of the Chicago anarchists, where I first made the acquaintance of Cunninghame Graham.

And without misgivings at all, I affirm that rarely has it come to pass in my knowledge that so many men and women of high intellectual culture and noblest faculties, moving in an atmosphere of highest thoughts, have gathered together. There was

Conybeare, member of Parliament, his skin yellow as a guinea, leading a sort of chorus of despair about people who thought a republic and liberty meant one and the same thing. May Morris and her attendant knight, Halliday Sparling, sat near the piano. When William Morris mounted the platform you would have been deafened by the applause. Then there was Annie Besant, a platform woman to the life, leader of many crusades into wildernesses theistic, radical, atheistic, individualistic, Malthusian, socialistic; abandoning her followers as she saw new lights, and even then on the verge of a new crusade of theosophy; Prince Kropotkin who thought nothing of personal glory or private gain; the great-hearted Frederick Harrison; that man of honest convictions Belfort Bax; Stewart Headlam who had been deprived of his church by the bishop; Shaw, a rufous man of pristine vigor. There were Dr. Aveling and his wife, the daughter of Karl Marx, with the doctor busy collecting money for the sending of an eloquently worded cablegram to Altgeld; there were lions from the Social Democratic Federation, from the Socialist League, from the Christian Socialist Society, from the anarchist group, from the Fabians. And there were foreigners, and detectives and journalists; and people merely curious; and young people plainly in love, with the man obviously forming the mind of the girl, for that sort must be everywhere.

"A pretty good-tempered crowd," said E. Printer, who had found me. "I'm no sympathizer with revolution, but there's an element of doubt in the case. In fact, I gave something to that Dr. Aveling Collection for a cablegram of protest, or appeal or something of the sort."

"I wouldn't lift a hand to stay the execution," observed my anarchist neighbor on the right. "Their deaths will advance the cause. A pardon would set things back."

Printer stared his surprise at that remark. "That's precious like being so far ahead that you are all in the rear with the laggards, like racers in a circular track," he said, and just then the meeting began with the singing of the "Marseillaise." Then we stirred everybody's blood with "La Carmagnole," and after that "Ça Ira." It was enthusiasm visible and audible. It was a great free tragic earnestness that turned into incandescent ire when athletic orators told of oppression and wrong, and packed juries, and third-degree confessions. But what a roar went up when some speaker, referring to the condemned Englishman, Fielden, said that in his speech in court he referred to the Chicago trouble as growing out of the Trafalgar Square meeting, and, by misquotation, it had been made to appear that he had offered to lead a mob down Michigan Avenue and storm the Calumet Club. Printer wriggled uneasily, then whispered, "I feel as if all this had flown out of my silly stick throwing. My God! Is it possible? What a soul-killing thought!"

At that moment, growing out of I know not what, something roared out by a bull-voiced man in the audience fired everyone to a tremendous shouting. Call it a convulsive outburst born of exasperation. Or call it a roar of desperate defiance. Or a growing frenzy. On the platform two speakers had found their feet and the house seemed divided, perilously it seemed to me. Then up rose a tall man who strode forward to the center of the platform and flung out a nervous hand with a gesture like that of a commanding prince; a man straight-limbed and handsome, and altogether knightly, so, at sight of him, both Printer and Withington bent forward to hear and the house became strangely still, not suddenly but with a spreading quiet, a quiet that swept to the edges from the center. For, somehow, Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham, member of Parliament, traveler, magistrate, author, always won the hearts of men. And he won because of his utter sincerity, as Morris too won. If it was easy, as it indeed was, to imagine Morris steering a Viking ship, it was easier to see Graham hung with clashing war-gear, and carrying a shining sword, and, with uplifted cup, calling out a health to his comrades and followers. But, in the usual sense of the word he was not eloquent with that floridity men demand, for earnestness and flowery speech hardly go together. For persuasiveness he cared nothing at all. Gesticulation he disregarded. Emotion he did not try to awaken. But openness of mind, breadth of view, sanity and discipline, these shone from him. His light was the light of high ideals. His fight was against that which warped and crippled and degraded, not against men.

His words of hate were against those things inimical to the things he loved, and the things he loved were those that made for manliness, and independence, and worth, and character. His hostility was to all that opposed man's well-being and progress, and richness of life. So I sat entranced, like one seeing a vision from some breezy hilltop. And, listening, it came to me that I should see the living world, should go forth heroic and strong to experience with clear intention, to know myself, and to prove myself in mood vigorous and adventurous. For many of these, I thought, who sat and listened, flocked to banners only because they were afraid of life; but no man should be afraid. As Livingstone had stood on the mountain and seen the smoke of a hundred villages in a land where no white man had set foot, and realizing that beyond far horizons were countries unknown and unseen, then, resenting all that incompleteness and limitation, had gone forth like a warrior knight alone, so also should I. Why spend years fighting for those who faced life anxiously and wretchedly?

"A man, by the Lord!" said Printer when Graham ended.

"An Elizabethan," said Withington at the same moment.

And I beheld my third horizon. Like an Elizabethan seaman I would go forth seeing how people and places were, finding myself in the search.

CHAPTER V

The Shadow of Sentimentality

I

YOU see, then, abundant reason for me to be at Trafalgar Square on November 13, 1887. It was enough that my captains and heroes, Cunninghame Graham and William Morris, would be there, they the more willing because authority had declared that no meeting would be allowed to protest against the government treatment of Ireland. Whispers went round, it is true, to the effect that policemen would be backed by troops, to ensure prohibition, but at such reports we laughed, somewhat uneasily perhaps. The governing body, we told one another, were fully persuaded that Englishmen would die for ancient liberties like Winkelreid at Sempach. The unemployed, with nothing to lose but their chains, unarmed but determined, would defeat the massed police as Jack Cade and his men of Kent had defeated the army of the king, should force be attempted. Then the denseness of bourgeois stupidity would be exposed. So we discussed details.

"It's simple," said John Burns. "We'll enter the square from all sides, stand at attention, then with the release of a couple of pigeons flung upward we'll go forward and through the police like a dose of salts." He nodded sagely, significantly.

Hyndman, historical in mood, told of Chartist meetings led by Feargus O'Connor and J. Bonterre O'Brien in spite of official proclamation, then touched lightly on the Peasants' War and the breakup of the feudal system. Afterwards, a grumbling fellow named Humphries said something about the necessity for a bomb gesture but was made to look ridiculous by someone who said that all the anarchists in England could be packed into a four-wheeled cab though the talk they indulged in could not be contained in a library ten times the size of that of the British Museum; whereupon the fiery Humphries, after firing an old-fashioned oath, denounced everybody as "milk and water" and took himself off. But, turning at the door to make a final remark, he told us that we had changed the color of the flag from dark red to delicate pink, then left without hearing the sarcastic question of "'Ow many bombs have you chucked?" launched by Williams. So from that you see a heterogeneous collection of men and women, Annie Besant important among the latter because of her Law and Liberty League. For if Annie Besant could not rule in any existing organization she would promptly found a new one. To reign supreme and indivisible was her aim.

Quite as effectively as if telephones had existed everyone concerned was notified, through the medium of local and branch societies scattered over a territory within the radius of ten miles from Westminster Abbey. And it delighted my heart to be detailed to notify the comrades in the neighborhood of Westminster, because the duty easily enabled me to step into Jake Kilrain's training quarters, that handsome pugilistic champion being engaged to fight Jem Smith in December. For Kilrain's victory I much desired because I had seen the Prince of Wales shake hands with Jem Smith, and Jem Smith I had known as a cab driver, through the introduction of Bill the knife-boy. Such exaltation clearly merited a fall.

2

The day of Trafalgar Square dawned bleak and gray with no sign of sun, as cheerless a day as ever came to the world for deeds of derring do. London wept. Things painted and things of iron and brass shed tears. Roadways were covered with that thin, gummy mud to be found nowhere but in London, and pavements were wet, as they had been for days. In dozens of open spaces, in a hundred rooms over beer houses, over stables, in empty shops of a sort that never can be made to pay, men listened to preliminary talks made by local orators whose burning phrases had long since become commonplaces. They were drear men, poorly clad in cheap clothes, who listened with half interest while they smoked clay pipes because all that they heard was so old, all that talk about the proletariat and the capitalist and the social system, to say nothing of the rights they should enjoy. When the local orator urged them to declare for liberty they mechanically said "'ear, 'ear!" and when he testified to his own ideals and hopes and fears, they tapped their feet on the floor by way of applause. Drear men I have called them, drear and grim, for their way of life was drear and grim. That which seemed like sullenness was an apathy begotten of all work and no play. They looked out on the world without hope. Not even Demosthenes could have dispelled the Sunday gloom that lay upon those who knew no enjoyment or delight, whose lives were lived meanly and anxiously, whose work was drudgery and no work a condemnation to hunger. So they listened in a mood of vast melancholy in a hundred bare halls, then, in no spirit of self-sacrifice, but as a relief of gray Sunday dullness, straggled out into the gray, weeping streets for a three-mile tramp through glue-like gray mud, headed for Trafalgar Square. Walking parallel to the procession went the respectable curious and the half-hearted. Here and there a couple of mounted policemen attached themselves to the paraders.

At Trafalgar Square came the surprise. Massed about the paved place were policemen ranged four deep, stolid men and solid, also enjoying the affair as a welcome interlude in a monotonous existence. There stood a battalion of Grenadier Guards, scarlet-coated, with tall busbies, with drawn bayonets too, and twenty rounds of ball cartridge. Minute by minute the roadway became more and more densely packed as procession after procession arrived to circle about the massed square of policemen and foot soldiers, adding to the vast uproar, not with shouts, but with what sounded to me like strange, muttering, distant thunder. It was a slow swirling of humanity; a kind of whirlpool of sorrowful, tired, hopeless men urged by mounted policemen who were not massed, but rode by twos and threes. Sometimes vague dangers threatened as when one horse reared and caused a stampede within a narrow space. There were isolated violent convulsions in twenty places at once, and those convulsions became more frequent when mounted police, often angry or fiercely combative, went clattering out of the roadway to charge knots of people on sidewalks. Then came hootings and booings, but never retaliations, because the panic-stricken men were leaderless and unguided. Meanwhile, riding round and round, like a glittering splendid many-hued serpent, went two squadrons of Life Guards, stonily disregarding the disorder.

Thus I saw things from the terrace in front of the National Gallery until a strong body of policemen carrying truncheons bore down on us. A blank astonishment filled me when I saw a young man stagger drunkenly and then realized that a policeman had struck him. When I raised him, on an impulse, a policeman hit me with his fist between my shoulders and it perplexed me afterwards to remember that I struck upward and skinned my knuckle on his teeth. My act was unconsciously done in the excitement of the moment. Indeed the whole affair resolved itself into a shouting and a running to and fro, a most astonishing hurly-burly. Nor do I remember working my way through the crowd and getting to the southwest end of the square where things were much quieter. There I made for a refuge, as the little iron-post guarded islands were called, and recognized Edward Carpenter who was talking to a man. That affair stands out in my mind because of the stately dignity of Carpenter. A policeman or two came up at the moment I set my foot on the refuge, and I heard them order Carpenter and his friend to "Move on!" Carpenter turned and said, "You are an impudent fellow!" and the policeman hesitated. But the picture was cut off when a swarm of men came running, three or four mounted police clattering in their rear. When next I looked Carpenter's companion seemed to be struggling with the police.

One saw in flashes, and things do not come to mind in chronological order. Something would be seen, a man falling perhaps, a stumbling horse, the impact of two crowds going in opposite directions, but the sight would be swept out of mind by a noise of screaming and shouting to be remembered long after.

Two incidents stand out prominently.

The first happened quite early, when Cunninghame Graham, fired by a sudden flame of resentful anger, turned and said something that I, being too far off, could not hear, and those nearest him set up a shout. So there came a surging forward, with Graham and Burns in the forefront, and then a confused running. Once I saw Graham, saw his hatless head and bushy hair as he assailed the police. Someone struck at him with a sword. But the Londoners had neither the heart nor the courage to follow him, so the end of the attack came with the same rough mauling of the two leaders who were seized by a dozen hands and then taken captive into the middle of the hollow square, as I afterwards learned. All I remember is that half a score of horse police ran into the crowded mass which scattered like a hive of disturbed bees. I heard a great hooting and shouting, then discovered myself to be wrestling furiously with one of the police, but tore myself away with the loss of my hat and the buttons on my vest; next there were some frantic movements for me between a couple of horses, and after a while I found myself limping badly, but did not know what caused the hurt.

Again I found myself at a corner where a group of people seemed to be in some safety, when four police came riding, breasting their horses into the crowd. People went down right and left, but recovered their footing before the mob had swept in behind, as water sweeps under the counter of a ship. But one man who did not regain his feet lay moaning piteously. I saw some raise him up and carry him away to safety, and at the same moment I went down from a cudgel blow wondering at the sudden darkness of the day. So ended the battle of Trafalgar Square.

Without knowing anything at all how I got there, I found myself standing against the wall of a house amazed at the press of people passing, wondering at the beating in my brain that went on with dull persistence, wondering at my plight of mud and blood and pain.

Long after, out of the mental darkness there came dim lights of remembrance, winking lights like firefly flashes. I remember seeing a black shadow of a man being beaten over the head and shoulders by a solitary policeman and seeing the man shield himself with upraised arms. I wondered why he struck no blow in return. Then an uneasy and fretful wondering came over me. "They won't fight," I seemed to be saying. "They won't fight at all." Another ghost memory comes with a swarm of men running away from a mounted policeman, and I heard myself say again "But they won't fight." Then a cheerful, talkative fellow seemed to be asking me questions and I sat down on a doorstep to listen, but there were lamp lights that came and went so I shut my eyes. So my account of the battle, like my version of every nerve-racking excitement in which I have participated, must needs lack that clear-cut picturesqueness of writers who, like demi-gods, somehow manage to be of the thing and apart from it. Badly battered as I was, for a day and a couple of nights crowds seemed to jostle and push and bawl. A kind of half-stupor had me in its grip. Cunninghame Graham and John Burns were sentenced to six weeks, imprisonment, magistrate and member of Parliament though Graham was. And respectable editors denounced him as a stirrer-up of trouble, but he wore their censure like a plume.

But we had our dead to bury, for the young man who had been stamped by horses at the corner of Northumberland Avenue died from his hurts, so on the next Sunday we marched in our thousands from Soho to Bow, hedged and surrounded by police mounted and afoot. Marching, some of us sang the song that Morris had made, a death song sad and stately:

What cometh here from east to west awending?
And who are these, the marchers stern and slow?
We bear the message that the rich are sending
Aback to those who bade them wake and know.
Not one, not one, nor thousands must they slay,
But one and all if they would dusk the day.

We asked them for a life of toilsome earning,
They bade us bide their leisure for our bread;
We craved to speak to tell our woeful learning;
We come back speechless, bearing back our dead.

Not one, not one, nor thousands must they slay,
But one and all if they would dusk the day.

They will not learn; they have no ears to hearken.
They turn their faces from the eyes of fate;
Their gay-lit halls shut out the skies that darken.
But, lo! this dead man knocking at the gate.
Not one, not one, but thousands must they slay,
But one and all if they would dusk the day.

Here lies the sign that we shall break our prison;
Amidst the storm he won a prisoner's rest;
But in the cloudy dawn the sun arisen
Brings us our day of work to win the best.
Not one, not one, nor thousands must they slay,
But one and all if they would dusk the day.

The day had been cold, miserable and cheerless, and dark fell early; with the street lamps giving a feeble uncertain light, we moved without seeing the banner that led us, and the way seemed doubly long. Taking things by and large, the usual pale, under-fed, ill-clad men who hung about on the edge of things at unemployed meetings did not form the procession. Rather it was composed of the stalwarts and the fairly well-to-do, the lusty ones who took their socialism and radicalism as an adventure.

By the time we reached the grave it was so dark that the men looked like phantoms, and Stewart Headlam had to read the burial service by the light of matches which we struck and held sheltered in our hats, but even then the light often failed because a cold, drizzling rain began to fall. So our crowd fast melted seeking comfort. William Morris, bare-headed, spoke, his face bent down to the grave, and his words were without harshness, yet full of bitter sorrow. Then he lifted his head a little and said, "Our friend who lies here has had a hard life, and met with a hard death; and if society had been differently constituted, his life might have been a delightful, a beautiful, a happy one. It is our business to organize for the purpose of seeing that such things do not happen; to try and make this earth a beautiful and a happy place." His voice rang out on a clarion note, and after that I had no taste for the platitudes and commonplaces of the rest of the speakers.

3

I think I have made it clear that a great disappointment filled me because the people for whom, as commanders and privates, some of us fought, turned out to be too cowardly to lift a hand in their own defence. There was apathy, a negativeness about them, which, some of us thought, might be the result of the blighting effect of commercialism. Others held it to be due to ill-nourished bodies and poor physique. Dr. Cantlie came out flat-footed and said that the Londoner, as well as other city dwellers, showed well-marked signs of degeneracy in the third generation. Cunninghame Graham, as quoted by his friend Wilfred Blunt, came to believe that labor representatives were a hopeless lot, who, on being elected to office, were bitten with the absurd idea that they were no longer working men but statesmen. Morris, incapable of unhappiness because of his many activities, was nevertheless full of disappointment because of the spiritlessness of the people who refused to fight for the freedom of speech. Printer and I, discussing the matter, reached the conclusion that the majority of men could have no desire for a more vital and exuberant life, nor could rise above mediocrity because they were unable to conceive a sturdy individualism, or to dream of a fullness of life. And in that Dan Cauthorne of Missouri agreed.

4

I must tell about Cauthorne who swam into my life because Peer had made his acquaintance on a boat sailing out of New York, where Peer had been to arrange for the publication of the American *Review of Reviews* I think.

This Cauthorne, having sold a couple of carloads of mules in St. Louis, took it into his head that he would like to look at some old castles, so Peer turned him over to me one day. He struck me as being what I may call a seasoned man. He was soft-toned, and slow of thought, with something of the patience of a philosopher. There seemed to be a sort of assured confidence about him which I liked very much indeed. He was in a state of perpetual astonishment about everything he saw, the old wool market at Minehead, Westminster Abbey, Napoleon's carriage at Madame Tussaud's, the remnant of the Roman fort at Bradwell, Stonehenge, the keeps and outer walls and dungeons of the Tower, and Windsor and Arundel and Dover and Warwick and Rougemont castle at Exeter, for we saw things thoroughly. You must picture him as a man of forty or thereabouts, strongly made and of middle height, clear-eyed and simple of dress, with nothing about him to tell of western life except a medium-brimmed Stetson hat. Sometimes we rode hired horses, but rarely. More often we went about in hansom cabs, which never lost the tang of novelty for him. Once or twice, in his enthusiasm, he bribed the cab driver to let him drive while the licensed man took his place inside.

But not the outward appearance or bearing of the man counts. His philosophy was the interesting thing, that and his swift judgment and appraisal of men, though it did not transpire that he had read any books of which we had ever heard, and his philosophy and man-valuation grew out of his experience on the range.

"You tell me," he said, when the conversation fell on the subject of the social condition of England, "you tell me that you don't like it. There's free range to be had elsewhere. The world's wide. Don't fool with the scabby sheep that can't rustle. Get out and rustle for yourself."

We spoke of the superiority of the democratic over the monarchical form of government, but he dissented. "With you in England, the gang's got things cinched and lets the common people have a little so that they can keep what they've got. The gang insures itself that way. With us, two gangs are fighting for the spoils and grab everything in sight so that the others won't fight so hard. You elect men who know how to run the job. We give men a job who want a job with nothing to do and who are too darn worthless to do a hand's turn of work. We're run by jack-leg lawyers, and the bigger the blatherskite the sooner he gets the office."

In a train between Brighton and Portsmouth we fell into talk with a positivist who announced his creed and ideal to life for others. "My mule's 'd be skin and bones on that idea," said Cauthorne. "Self-interest's a better rule. Keep your eye on the feedin' and your heels ready to keep the other fellow off. And get away from the losers and failures. You can't change 'em. They may change you."

"I believe," said I, "that it is possible to have a perfect government. That's what we are aiming at. To make——"

"Believe in yourself, my boy," he said, interrupting for once. "Try your hand at finding yourself. See how you can run yourself before you plan to run a government. Take this talk of revolution now. Can you do things? Bake bread? Kill and dress your own beef? Could you get along without a house? Can you start out and live by running a business of your own? Or must you hire out? Can you go at things first hand?" He added, after a pause, "There ain't no gov'ment gets aholt of things but won't press to the limit some time or other. I say that as a good democrat, mind you. Old Jefferson said it when he said the best gov'ment is the gov'ment that bosses least, or something of the sort. You'd be the toughest kind of gov'ment with the state doing everything, handlin' everything, buttin' in everywheres. Everyone wearin' gov'ment uniform I suppose. You'd leave nothin' for God Almighty to do." It took attention to understand his vernacular, especially when he became eloquent. At ordinary times you might have taken him for a man of some culture.

Once he came out with an extraordinary question. It was when we were boating on the upper Thames and had passed William Morris in a punt, fishing.

"These socialists now," he began. "That man looks right, attending to his play. But how do they get along among themselves? That's what I want to know."

Once Cauthorne became greatly interested in a blind beggar man who stood asking alms at Holborn, and who bore a card with a legend telling that he had been the victim of Michael

Barrett who tried to blow up Clerkenwell Prison in an attempt to release two Fenian prisoners. When he learned that Barrett's was the last public execution, nothing would do but that the contemporary newspaper giving an account of the hanging must be found. So we discovered it and found that little interest of morbid kind had been manifested, that the crowd had been small, that there had been no disorderly mob nor fighting for places. "And so," observed Cauthorne in his philosophical way, "they did away with public hangings because people took no interest in them. We have lynchings because people enjoy them, and they won't be stopped till people don't enjoy them." A pause preceded one of his elliptic utterances. "You can't make sheep out of goats by laws. A lot of wriggling words won't make yahoos decent."

But what amazed and amused me with this man from the West was the unending delight he seemed to take in hearing about jealousies and rivalries that existed among leaders of the socialist movement. That Frank Harris was suspected of being a German spy was a piece of gossip that amused him mightily. Someone else told him that Smith-Headingly was a French spy and he spent half of a day trying to get a sight of him, as one might have stalked some strange animal. It excited him, as much as he was able to be excited, to learn how Stepniak had stabbed Mezentzoff to death after practicing stabbing at trees. We sat with Prince Kropotkin for two hours, hearing him talk about Siberian prisons and how he escaped from jail. "There's your thoroughbred," said Cauthorne. "But he'd never fit in with the democratic lot. He would be a rebel under any sort of gov'ment." He became a little involved, a little cryptic, but I gathered that in his view all the worthwhile socialists were individualists, who, if socialism became established, would immediately revolt against the system.

It had to come out that there was a tremendous lack of unanimity in the socialist body: that Hyndman and Morris had quarreled and set up different camps; that Annie Besant had started a little organization within an organization. That it was Morris's pocketbook and generosity, not the proletarians' liberty that kept the League alive and the *Commonwealth* afloat. And Printer one day, coming to know of Cauthorne's curiosity in such matters, spoke lashingly. He had given Dr. Aveling a guinea as contribution toward sending a cablegram to Governor Altgeld, but the doctor had pocketed the money and forgotten to send the message. He went on to castigate Henry Hyde Champion who had taken Tory money. He spoke of the hatred that lay between Hyndman and Frank Harris, and he predicted fearful things concerning the free union of Aveling and Eleanor, the daughter of Karl Marx. So Cauthorne fell into discourse on the advantages of "going things alone," as he put it. "Hates like them," he declared, "never die. They go on and on and on. If that gang got into power they'd be choppin' one another's heads off like any other revolution. If they don't they'll keep up their hates till the last mother's son of 'em's laid in his grave."

How far those predictions concerning some of the prominent men were justified, the less said the better. There were, in the movement, those who were knights, and others who were bounders and swine. Neither Aveling nor Harris could be called a knight. And that hates have endured I know from many letters written by Hyndman and Harris and others in my possession, the most salient ones marked "private and confidential" with material in them which, if published, would set libraries and bookshops on fire. But my incendiary days are done.

5

If I seem to insist too much on Cauthorne, the explanation is that he struck me as being a new type of man. He neither smoked nor drank anything in the way of wines or beer and somewhat expressed disapproval because I did both. But he was incredulous because neither I nor the majority of young men with whom I consorted concerned ourselves about women. We were too busily engaged, too preoccupied, what with our political fads and our boating and swimming and gymnasium work. Girls were not fun. "Well," he observed, at the end of a talk about that kind of thing, "come to think of it, it's a pretty good idea not to mate up the stock too young. A man tied up can't well be independent. And when your mind's on girls it can't be on other things. A stallion wouldn't win against a racer." Then his American accent came as he swept into reminiscence. He told how he lived on the plains for months at a time with never a thought of women, how they never entered his head until he "got to layin' round loose," how he would fire any Mexican herder as unfit for the job who took a woman to camp, how with him ease and indulgence went hand in hand. Then he broke off suddenly and went off on a new tack. Why, he asked, did I not shake myself loose from all those fourth-hand opinions and ideas? Why had I never learned to think in one-man terms instead of crowds? Why had I not tried the world single-handed? How was I much different from the men of Kentucky and Arkansas who went in for feuds? My feud was capitalist against worker. Why did I not know the tergiversation of politicians for the empty stuff that it was? He did not use the word tergiversation, but said "rattle-brained blether."

"You are herding with runts and failures," he told me.

"You mean that I should travel? Go abroad? Emigrate?" I asked.

"A man's a failure or a success anywhere. Where he goes he takes himself with him. If you're going to make good you c'n do it here. Or you can do it yonder. What you got to knock out of your head's flightiness. You got to learn to go step by step, not by jumps and leaps. You don't want to go changing the world for others. Make it fit yourself. Get away from sentimentality. Get into a game for yourself and hang to it like grim death, three hundred and sixty-five days a year, and each day a slow one. What a man's got to do is to train himself to patience. That's the game. Not hopelessness but patience. Get fanciful notions out of your head and go on in patience. I'm a stockman and know you can't hurry Nature by a day. It takes so long for a cow to breed, so long for a sheep. About all you can do is to keep out the runts and no-accounts. And don't be one. You got to keep on doin'. Keep on doin'. Weedin' is the big job. Just weedin' out. Weedin' out of your stock and weedin' out of yourself. Nobody can teach you how to live. You got to learn yourself. The only thing that's wrong in England is that you can't get a piece of land of your own. Get a corner of the world, don't hire out, then win through."

I give that outline of his philosophy because it rang new to me. He expounded it one day as we walked over the Sussex downs, and as we topped a rise we came in easy sight of an old shepherd watching a flock of sheep, one who turned out to be an apple-cheeked fellow who seemed to radiate health and contentment.

"Try him with your socialism," said Cauthorne. "At any rate, you'll be sure to get something worth while."

So we struck up an acquaintance and I expounded something of my views and gospel of discontent, telling the shepherd of coming change. He could, I learned, neither read nor write, so the pamphlet I offered was as nothing. But he listened for half an hour and when I came to an end he took a pinch of snuff, then said things in a Scottish brogue somewhat overlaid by Sussex speech.

"When yon trouble comes wull ye be stout enow to play your part? Can ye grow things to eat? Can ye mak' bread fit to eat? Can ye kill and dress a wether? Or wull ye do your part wi' tongue, walkin' hither and yon wi' a book under your oxter? Ye seem a likely lad, but the pity is ye ken so many things that's no' worth kennin'. If all this tapsalteeris wark cooms aboot, 'tis the likes of us who know things 'll be feedin' the likes of you who only talk."

Again I seemed to be accused of uselessness.

A silence fell, which was broken by Cauthorne saying, "Them sheep now is Southdowns. A good-lookin' bunch."

"Squire 'oward's they are," answered the shepherd. "An' never a runt in the flock."

Then Cauthorne and the shepherd talked sheep, so things political paled into insignificance. I remember being amazed when the shepherd, to prove some assertion, caught a sheep and parted its black lips to show something, and I exclaimed because the wether had no teeth in its upper jaw. At my revealed ignorance both Cauthorne and the shepherd grinned, though not offensively, but somehow that set me to wondering at my boldness in attempting to take a part in pulling to pieces a complex social organization and advocating reconstruction along simpler lines.

6

It would have an heroic ring if I said that all those hazy notions about the cowardice of the ordinary day laborer and the necessity for self-assertion and independence suddenly took shape in my mind with an "I-am-master-of-my-Fate" resolution, but it would not be true. As I see the mental process it was like a chemical experiment that I saw my son do, when, tapping lightly a bottle that seemed to contain pure water, crystals commenced to form. My mind was exactly like that highly saturated solution which formed a rallying point at a critical moment under agitation, so that unseen molecules gathered to form shape. With me crystallization set in, because of contact with Victor's aunt, a Maude Fotheringay, whose husband, a wool broker, had a place down in Surrey. Victor had talked of me so she ordered him to present me at court, as it were, but I did not jump at the invitation.

"All that fuss," I said, cryptically, leaving Vic to infer what he chose, but having in mind social conventions.

"She's all right," Victor assured me. "The old boy beams, eats, drinks, and smokes, then goes to sleep. Rotten rich and all that. But she's alive. Interested in forward movements, you know. Knows all about them. Good-natured as the devil."

"But that sort goes in for functions," I objected.

He thought for a moment.

"If you don't seem to like it, if you turn out not of that bent, she'll manage things," he told me. "Tea and toast and all that with talk. Maybe walks in the rose garden, or horseback. She just wants to know you. It's like her. She's right as a trivet."

So I pictured a little old lady with silvery hair and a gently inquisitive manner, one probably dressed in black silk and lace, and decided that a couple of days might not be so bad. But instead, I found Maude Fotheringay to be one of those bright-eyed, pleasant-mannered, entirely social, harmoniously gowned women who are as graceful as flowers. Chester

Hall was a place of servants, and maids and caps and aprons, and dignified coachman and butler; it was a place of massive cabinets, and silver bowls, and bronzes; it was the kind of place where you see a library with books so expensively bound that reading them is sacrilege; where the rector of the neighboring church expresses solicitation about everyone's health, where a Persian may live in amity on the terrace with a great Dane; where you cannot help thinking that the upkeep must assume gigantic dimensions. But the expensiveness mattered not at all because Maude Fotheringay could remove intrusive anxieties. She had the gift of friendliness. She was the conqueror of things. You must see her as a magician able to conjure up untroubled happiness, an order maker, one in whose presence you forget position and status and grades and caste. She flashed her social character at first sight in a simple, clear-cut way. There were no risky experiments in adapting ways to new company. Victor took himself off on some errand five minutes after we entered the house, and, being left alone, I went through the French windows and on to a terrace. Presently Maude Fotheringay came, her hands outstretched in welcome, a figure almost transparent in a Grecian robe of light blue caught at the waist with a girdle. A sort of affection for and loyalty to her flooded my mind before I had been in her presence for ten minutes. It amazed me when some chance reference to "when a girl of five or six," that she made, set me to privately calculating, and I knew that our ages could not be more than a year apart—two at the utmost. Yet she seemed whole worlds my superior because of her poise.

As Victor had predicted there came tea and toast and a little talk "and all that," the "all that" turning out to be a frank and pleasant taking stock of myself, my views, my hopes and aims and ambitions. Evasion, under her catechizing, was impossible. Had I committed a foul murder I certainly would have confessed the deed to her should she have suggested a confession. I was almost stupefied to find myself wishing that she would express some whimsical desire involving danger to the doer. I told myself that the wish was silly to the point of idiocy, but there it was, all the same.

During the tea she put certain questions that did not involve any personal reminiscences. "Of course, I understand that you are bursting with altruism," she said. "We need not go into that. You would go cheerfully to the stake so that man might reap, and eat, and live by day. All that kind of thing."

Then the man of the house, who had been in a mood of heavy seriousness, as one solving problems, spoke.

"You'll allow me to take my forty winks, I'm sure," he said.

I regarded his retreating form with hostility. He was too broad. Too fat. Too bull-like. Too thick-lipped. Too clumsy. Too old. Too gross. It was a clear case of Beauty and the Beast. His hand, a purplish one, had looked like a bear's claw when it rested on the table. And he made noises when he drank tea. Here was the bloated capitalist, and no mistake about it. My prejudices, I told myself, were social, not personal.

"What are you frowning about?" asked Victor of me.

"Was I? I didn't feel that way," said I.

"Frowning like the devil," he went on. "Frowning (*pardonnez-moi, madame*), because you have fallen in love at first sight with bonnie Maudie, winsome Maude with eyes of loveliest hue." He explained. "We were brought up together, you know. Sweethearts at school. So don't be afraid to like her. She's the salt of the earth. . . . Well, you'll have to excuse me. I'm going to the billiard room. If Maude doesn't knock a good deal of nonsense out of your head, I'm all at sea. It's her way."

We heard his plangent tenor as he climbed the stairs, singing:

"I never saw a fairer,
I never loved a dearer,
An neist my heart I wear her
For fear my jewel tine."

I want to convey the impression that Victor and his aunt were on the best of affectionate terms and playing a species of high-hearted game. The atmosphere between them evidently was one fostered to counteract the heavy seriousness, not to say dullness, of the master of the house.

So she and I went down the terrace steps, past the gold-fish pool, down a tree-shaded walk across which lay an arabesque of wavering shadows, and came to the flower garden. Now and then she bent to caress a flower, to enjoy the fragrance of a rose, or to touch lightly a petal, and all the while she talked or questioned.

"This interest in socialism now," she said, resuming the topic, "is curious. A delightful dance, I suppose, but one that you cannot keep up forever. . . . All that self-surrender. All that following out of plans made by others. You know there must be a creative self in you."

I floundered a little, saying something about studying social conditions, but felt that I was not getting along very well.

"Do you believe in yourself?" she asked. "That's the question. . . . Or do you merely blunder along following other men? There's the trouble. So many of you young men who might be doing splendid things are just treaders in other men's paths, trying to find out what others think, what others do, what others have said, the manner in which they have won. Can't you see that anyone who is to win, must win for himself? That whatever you do you must dare to try your own experiment. That you must believe in yourself. What others have done does not matter at all. What you do yourself does matter very much indeed. . . . The effort that astonishes. There. That expresses it. The effort that astonishes. A new path broken. To choose a way and keep on through failure and triumph, whatever the chosen way may be. I do not believe that a man should have the heroic in mind. Only that he should do whatever he has undertaken unafraid of his own experiment."

Written down, it looks a little like preaching, but she did not preach. She did not say all that in the minute it takes to read it. They are the salient things that I now remember. As she talked I came to understand that what I lacked were discipline and patience, especially discipline. And as I understood, and tried to understand more, another part of my mind watched the play of sunlight on her cheek, watched her rounded arms when her wide sleeves fell back, the way she drew herself up proudly when something she said required emphasis. Sometimes, seeing her profile, I had a queer impression that I had known her before, and wondered. Then in a flash memory came. I remembered the two women in the carriage at the time of the riots.

"The riot. Those two five-pound notes——" I began, and she gave a little happy laugh. Then unleaped a third self in me, one very grateful, and full of tremendous admiration, and almost ready to worship this goddess with blue eyes and red lips and flowing hair and a smile all sympathy and jolly kindness.

"I knew. I knew," she cried. "I knew when Victor first described you that you were the young man when I was in the brougham. I thought you were poor and unemployed, and felt sorry to see all that strength and energy wasted among chicken-hearted loafers. I wanted to tell you how foolish you were, letting yourself get battered and beaten. You looked terribly excited, you know. Then you did that . . . driving the horses through the mob."

Her eyes danced and her teeth flashed and delight played on her face like summer lightning. "It was splendid," she said, and made a little motion with both hands, almost like a child in greeting. What irrational impulse made me take both her hands in mine I never could understand. She gave me no invitation. Indeed, had she done so I would have resented it in one I almost worshipped. By some impulse I took her hands in mine then kissed her, not with passion but as one kisses a child. For a swift instant I feared I had offended, for she drew herself up straight. Then she gave a swift look along the avenue of trees and her face grew rosy. "It does not matter," she said. "Let us go on to the house."

There must have been many hours that were tedious and colorless in the three days I spent at Chester Hall, but they have vanished from my memory. The sharp-cut thing that stands out is conversation with Maude, talks during walks on the terrace, in the library, in the garden, for Victor occupied himself with horses and sheep and pheasants, and Fotheringay the master sat about or slept, a figure dull and tame and featureless as an idol. Those conversations stand out because they came to pass without strain or effort. We thought aloud without self-consciousness. I was like a man who, having attained some breezy hilltop, found his horizon strangely extended. And the dominant note that sounded through all was that man should live a life worthy of being lived, what she called a "first-hand life," doing something productive, experimenting and experiencing, persevering, refusing to confess to disappointment, the end not fame or an heroic name but belief in one's self. I came to regard myself as a maudlin sentimentalist because of my socialistic activities.

Suddenly it dawned upon me that she mistook my social position, probably regarded me as having possessions, or expectations, or at least a sufficiency to enable me to do something in a necessary commercial way. If so did she take me for a trifler and an idler, a social hanger-on and a parasite? We were on horseback, the four of us, when that idea came to me, riding on a grass-edged road along a ridge called Leith Hill, in sight of an old farmhouse with a steep roof and red brick walls. A great cloud came upon me at the thought. Was I an intruder in a paradise to which I had no right? While my mind argued and speculated, I heard myself say, "You may as well know, Maude, that I am penniless and living from hand to mouth, with no profession, and a patched-up kind of school education, a social misfit going about——"

She flicked her mare with her riding whip, just touch enough to cause the animal to mend its pace, then reined in again to a walk. I saw a little flush mount into her cheeks, an angry one. With a toss of her head she said, "You disappoint me."

"I'm sorry," I said. "But I didn't intend any false pretences."

"The kind of man I hoped you were has no right——" she began, but I interrupted, hotly.

"I'll just drop behind the others and ride to the house alone," I told her, reining in. "I'm sorry, of course."

"Come on. Ride with me," she commanded, petulantly almost, and I perceived somehow that I had got on the wrong track.

"No end of misunderstanding," she said. "People can't think on the same plane. . . . That's about all we can be certain of."

After that we rode for half a mile or more in unpleasant silence.

"Can't we—I can't understand what all this means," I said.

"Oh, everything's gone cold, like a heavy cloud hiding the sun on a spring day," she answered. "The peace is gone . . . and one doesn't want to be talky and rhetorical. . . . I meant the comfort of friendship had nothing at all to do with money and position, then you dragged up all the silly old prejudice. Dragged it up as stupidly as it might have been dragged up the other way—what do I want to say? It's as silly one way as another, that pulling across stage a curtain of separation. Thou shalt not be friends because of money, is as idiotic when said with one with money as by one without. Don't you see that? Why should a man without money make pitiable excuses?"

"They were not pitiable excuses. They were explanations," I said.

"It's all the same," she retorted swiftly. "The true way with real friendship would be to give without ostentation and receive without the slightest feeling of humiliation. For that, you have to rise above consideration of nonsense about money and you did not rise. That's what I meant."

"I am sorry," I said.

"I don't want you to be sorry. . . . But everything's different now. There are complexities. . . . I'm going to ride with Victor. . . . Come on, Vic. Let's race." She flicked her horse again and it leaped ahead, then Vic tore past.

"I'm going to ride back to the old farmhouse," I told Fotheringay, when he came up, and so got rid of him. I wanted to weigh, to examine, to regulate my emotion, and he was no fit companion for such a mood. I had a feeling of having destroyed something of infinite delicacy in that friendship which I knew was not and could not be love, and felt heavy, as one under the shadow of a bereavement.

At dinner it astonished me to find Maude full of gaiety, very flower-like in a diaphanous dress that made her look semi-transparent. The party numbered five, we three and the rector and his wife, for Victor had gone to Brighton on one of his unexplained and sudden errands. The visitors were very ecclesiastical minded; intent, it seemed, upon enlightening Mr. Fotheringay as to the necessity and cost of some railings to enclose the churchyard. I heard him go so far as to express an opinion that every English gentleman has to be interested in the welfare of temples wherein men may worship. He further added ponderously, "The welfare of the church is of world-wide import," and after that showed signs of inventing an excuse to take himself off. But Maude caught his eye at a critical moment.

"Victor's friend," she said, "must catch the 8.40 train, and I have promised to drive him over to the village in the dogcart. So that will give the rector the opportunity to show you his plans. Mrs. Vance, I am sure, will see that Mr. Fotheringay does not miss the vital import of what the rector says. Oh, yes. Please put me down for five pounds, will you?"

I thought that never had I listened to a lie told in a style so simple, a manner so free from emphasis.

"I dislike telling lies," she explained as we drove along, going slowly by a circuitous lane to the station, "but sometimes it seems necessary and of the highest merit to rule circumstances. But I never lie except to liars engaged in lying, and they were all doing that. Lying about their interest in the church."

Then she broke into her message. I was, she held, devoting myself unselfishly to others and thereby committing the sin of self-surrender. I was wandering aimlessly but should find a path and follow it to the end that I might become myself. Every man worth his salt should develop his creative force, though it found outlet in improving the breed of horses as in Victor's case, or in writing a book that was not mere word spinning, or in bringing order out of disorder. Her creative work would be, for the present, to arouse and stimulate me because she utterly refused to perpetuate the Fotheringay stock.

"Why did you marry him?" I could not help asking.

"To spend his money," answered this most amazing woman.

"I have created Chester Hall, have made him spend and spend and spend. I can't make anything of him, cannot exalt him or purify his money-possessed soul, but I can use his money to establish order and beauty. I too have been bitten by William Morris, you see."

We drove quite a long way in silence after that, until, indeed, we saw the signal lights of the railroad station. "Well!" she said, "and here we are. . . . No. There need be no kissing farewell. That was spontaneous before. This would not be. Why not make your start? You'll not do creditable things with a jump, but do everything in time, by hours and days and weeks, as this master of mine got millions by pennies and halfpennies. In a way he too has wisdom and strength and patience, qualities you should cultivate in yourself. Know how to obey your higher self. Play the game square. . . . Here is your train, and so good-bye. . . . I want to hear from you, but not to see you."

I wondered why she did not look at me, and worried a little because she would wonder at my silence, but I could find nothing to say that was not obvious and commonplace.

"I want you as a friend more than anything. . . . Good-bye, dear. Let me know you as cheerful and brave-spirited. And vigorous. . . . Quick; get your bag! . . . Vigorous in body and mind and heart. . . . Make haste! You must be quick. The train does not stop long and you must go. . . . How lonely everyone in the world is! Shadow and sunshine. . . . Your bag, dear. Hurry. And read this."

She pitched a fat envelope to me, which, trying to catch with my left hand, I missed. While I was picking it up she drove away. I had to run to catch my train, but caught sight of her as we rolled out of the station. I troubled beyond measure because she did not so much as wave a hand. That troubled feeling passed into a mood of fierce rebellion because I could not get the window down before the bridge abutment shut her from my sight.

My fellow companion in the compartment who seemed to have awoke from drowsing evinced friendliness, but I resolutely avoided him and turned to the envelope she had given me, while my mind wove a curiously complicated web of regret and happiness and longing and unfulfilled desire. The thickness of the package gave me disappointment since it resulted from a few Bank of England notes. But I gave them no attention. The real satisfying fullness lay in a brief, pencil-scrawled note on the mauve-tinted, gilt-edged Chester Hall paper, which ran:

> That flash of affection might have grown into love, but love rarely flowers into the finer thing, friendship, and it is the finer thing I need. Will you give me that? Can you be the true friend I want, a soul noble and generous in the midst of plenty; one brave in poverty; one clean among the unclean; one strong and fair when a master of men; one rich in friends to the end that friendship may be knit like a web? Will you be a knight with a shield for the lonely who yearn for fellowship? Especially that, my dear. Good-bye.
>
> MAUDE.

The high gods must have known my resolutions and my hopes when I read that through a mist; but, doubtless, they were bound to the weaving of a pattern in which she and I were threads that ran in opposite directions, for I never saw her again. I wrote long letters, not always receiving a reply because for years I had no address. Two of my letters could not have reached her. They were written from Tierra del Fuego and given to the captain of a sealing schooner for delivery somewhere and somewhen to a mailing steamer. My happily whimsical friend of ardent thoughts and generous dreams met her end at sea, off the Isle of Man, when a Dundee steamer foundered. I am sure that knowing the end to be hard at hand she faced her fate with courage, yet with a wilful longing for life.

7

"How much of this bundle of consciousness is Me, how much of it is not Me?" The question presented itself over and over again that night. The real myself seemed to have shrunk to a mere point, a thing vestigial to the point of disappearance, while a strange something had been nourished instead, a monster all unsynthesized, all compounded of other men. If I once had a soul of my own I had lost it. At no time could I trustfully say "I think," because I did not think, but merely repeated, parrot-like, what others had said. And, materially considered, a third of my span of life had already gone without any one of that multitude of selves knowing how to do a thing to justify my presence on the earth. In civilization I was a failure, a mere hanger-on and a loafer, producing nothing, knowing nothing, aiming at nothing. The expatriated shepherd on the downs and the stock man from Missouri, both of whom I had at first regarded with that self-conscious superiority which is the mark of the snob, would have been my masters in the open places. Therefore away from civilization I must surely perish as a canary released from its cage would perish. But Maude, thirsting for friendship, had chosen me. Or rather she had chosen that self which she hoped I might become, not a dashing hero elbowing policemen and ranting and herding with hobble-de-hoys at church parades, but a smooth-running human mechanism, symmetrical, truthful, disciplined, vigilant, self-determining.

Then a mood of indignation took me. What a situation it was when I came to look at things. Not only did I have no foot of land to call my own, but I moved on sufferance. There were open places where I was bidden to keep off the grass. In the countryside I might be told, at any time, that the field I crossed was private property. If I wanted to sit by a river permission had to be asked by the man who owned the river bank. I had nothing but an upstairs room, a cubic measurement of air high off the ground. Even the books, in a sense, were nothing but the recorded thoughts of men who did not express ideas as ideas, but rather laid down a way of thinking and believing, of feeling and acting, their tendency being to control, and control, and control, never to stimulate individual energy. Must I, then, shatter the idol of Altruism as I had shattered the idol of Respectability? Was Altruism a mirage and no real horizon? Complaining of the abuses of power by government, what had I and my co-workers been doing but giving to the abuser still more power? And I, an agent active in moulding opinion, a would-be shaper of the destinies of men, was in a mental muddle with no opinion of my own, a man bewildered, and so impregnated with the ideas of caste and position that I had not been able to accept friendship freely.

I would have to start afresh. That seemed clear. I would have to pull myself out of the crust that bound me, as a lobster does. I would have to begin again with no ties, no hampering limitations, no possessions that bound me with the past life. Somewhere I would have to be an individualist in all that the word implied. And it would be almost like dying; that sort of going into a new life.

But where? That question loomed large. I took the revolving globe and regarded it. In those British Isles lay no foot of earth on which I could be free. In any country in Europe I would, sooner or later, become involved in national jealousies and hates, for times were very full of peril. Should I do as Barthema had done and walk to India, to the furthest confines of Asia? But that would be no more than following a trail. North America? There were members of my family, and all the movements and excitements which I would wish to escape. Why not the southern hemisphere? I traced an imaginary course that took me to Cape Verde, then to Brazil, and down the coast to Rio de la Plata. And there on my old-fashioned globe lay a great territory marked "Unexplored."

Patagonia!

And more southward still, Tierra del Fuego!

I hunted out an atlas, one sadly out of date, and turned to the lower part of South America. There seemed to be no towns, no settlements, no rivers. Then came to mind Jules Verne's *Voyage Round the World in Search of the Castaway*, in which was told the story of a journey across Patagonia with a splendid savage named Thekla. Suddenly everything grouped itself around the fact that down there I could find a piece of land, free and generous land, land that I could utilize and on which I could live though the entire human race should perish because of its soulless stupidity. I would learn to live, would build myself, would go forward with none to stay my advance. A vigorous, wholesome life in which I would be . . .

So splendid seemed the growing dream that I feared the coming of the morning and the vanishing of that glow. "No," I told myself, "I must start now. This night. This hour." I regarded myself sentimentally.

> Again, good-bye [I wrote Maude]. To find myself I must begin now. To accept your gift would be doing things by halves. Not because of pride, but because of a necessity in me I return it. I have wasted a third of my life and more than that of myself, perhaps so much of myself that I can never rebuild. I am not going for adventure, nor for gain, nor for love. I must do something at first-hand to the end that I may respect myself, for I have not made the world better or richer by as much as a cabbage grown with my own hands. As you may see by the course traced on this map, I am not following any man.

Nor was it until two days later that I remembered I had failed to enclose the map. That failure was due to my haste, for I mailed the letter a little after midnight then returned to my room, after a cup of coffee at an all-night stand, to pack up.

But when I began to pack up complexities arose. There were books, twelve six-foot shelves of them; books on socialism, anarchism, communism, positivism, free-thought, agnosticism, spiritualism, vegetarianism. There were Karl Marx and a host of his interpreters; Henry George and pamphlets to further the cause of single-tax; and a separate shelf on which books about utopias hard-pressed one another, More and Bellamy and Gronlund and Campanella and Morris and an extraordinary production called *Cæsar's Column* by Ignatius Donnelly in which airships appeared in fiction for the first time as war machines. There were piles of pamphlets by the Social-Democratic Federation, and the Socialistic League, and the Fabian Society, and the Christian Socialist group, and the Stoke Newington Anarchists, and the South Place Religious Society, and the Newton Hall philosophers. A chest of drawers was packed with *Justice*, and *The Commonweal*, and the *Secular Review*, and *National Reformer*, and *The Freethinker*, and a Boston publication called *The Word;* and *The Church Reformer*, and *The Journal of Economics*, and the parish paper called *Good*

Will. Then there were evolutionary and revolutionary poets and novelists and essayists as represented by their best known works, much of Charles Kingsley and Clough and Huxley and Reade and Whittier; much controversial literature too. There were photographs of pugilists, John L. Sullivan, Charles Mitchell, Jake Kilrain, Jem Smith and Slavin of modern heroes, and a carefully gathered fistiana of the past. The bulky scrap books too took much space, filled with clippings about the thirty-nine-round bare-knuckle fight between Mitchell and Sullivan at Chantilly; the Kilrain-Smith affair at Siena; the hundred-and-eighty-five-round between Madden and Hayes. There were many copies of parody songs done by Watkins and Vokes, two of my friends, which I had set to music, worth nothing except to show that then as now the old heroes were held in highest esteem and the modern ones considered lightly. One of them ran in part:

Do you think the Yankee slugger
Who loves to boast but not to fight,
When compared with John C. Heenan
Stands out noble, clear, and bright?

Chorus: *No, sir!*

Do you think our famous champion,
Which Jem Smith, it is his name,
As compared with Old Tom Sayers
Adds fresh laurels to his name?

Chorus: *No, sir!*

All that, and much more, I regarded solemnly, wondering at the way things had gathered about me in that simple life of mine. Some of the collection had never seemed so attractive as at that hour of choosing. I affected to ignore the call of the most treasured things, especially a medal or two gained for boxing and cross-country running. Then an intrusive thought about clothes dominated me. And while I pondered, thinking about the heat of the equator and the cold of the Antarctic, a ghost voice whispered: "It would be best to wait a day or two and see Maude," and I knew it for the beginning of the dying of my newborn decision. "Then," said I to myself, "I would have to say, 'I have been unworthy of your confidence.'"

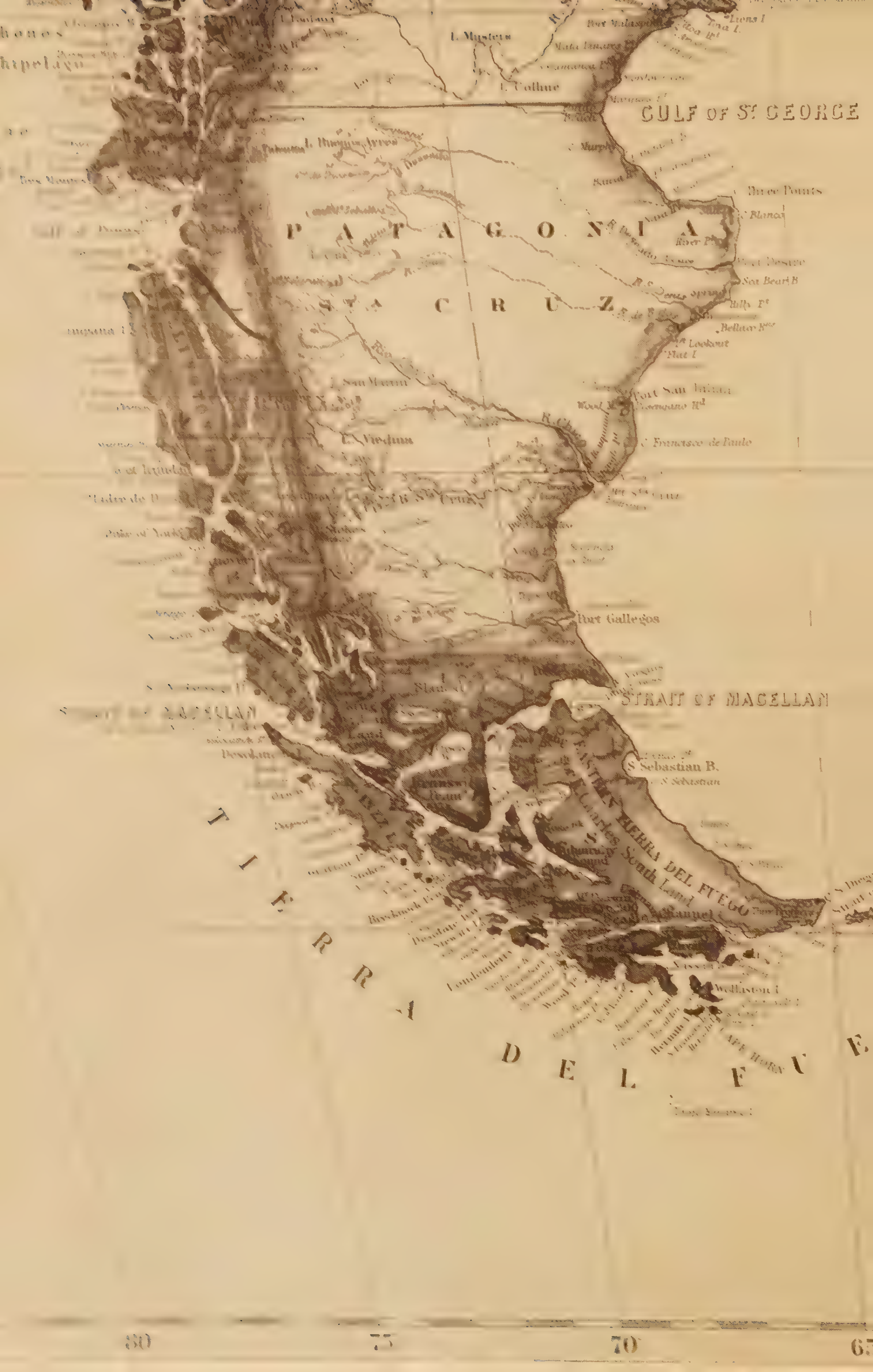
So I went downstairs, and out to the coal house where I kept my bicycle, which struck me as being a queer way to a piece of unencumbered land in Patagonia, but the only way I knew. As I mounted my wheel at 2 A.M. a policeman appeared who displayed close interest.

"What's all the game?" he asked.

I assured him that it was only a little run, but he seemed suspicious and harsh and morose.

"I know all about them little runs," he said. "And I'll know you when I see you again. These games 'as a suspicious look." It became clear that he was passing into severity. Already he had become haughty. I recalled that Karl Marx had been arrested and spent a night in prison for trying to pawn his own silver spoons because of the suspicion of a pawnbroker, aided by a policeman. Men had been detained for being in possession of inflammatory literature, and my room was stuffed with that kind of thing. To be sure matters would become clear presently but there might be expensive delay, and in addition to the clothes that I stood up in my only possessions were two dollars. So I put away thoughts of rebellion, put away explanations truthful and incredible about Patagonia; I polished and refined my manners, confessing to being an early morning railway porter on duty at Paddington Station, and so disarmed his suspicions immediately.

"Tell the truth and shame the devil, as the sayin' is," said the policeman, treating the matter poetically. So ended my conflict with authority as, taking nothing, I left England in order that I might find myself.



GULF OF ST GEORGE
PATAGONIA
STA CRUZ
Lions I
L. Musters
L. Colhue
Three Points
Blanco
Port Desire
Sea Bear B
Bellaco Rks
Lookout
Port San Julian
Wood Mt
C. Francisco de Paulo
L. San Martin
L. Viedma
R. Chico
R. Sta Cruz
Port Sta Cruz
Port Gallegos
STRAIT OF MAGELLAN
S. Sebastian B.
C. Sebastian
KING CHARLES SOUTH LAND
EASTERN TIERRA DEL FUEGO
Desolation I
Londonderry I
Wollaston I
CAPE HORN
TIERRA DEL FUEGO
80
75
70
65

BOOK III

Living for Self

CHAPTER I

The Hunger for Experience

I

I CHOSE Harwich for my port of departure because I wanted to visit Antwerp again, my thoughts having often turned to its cathedral tower, as I had viewed it first from my bedroom window; and the courtyard of the Plantin Printing House with those windows of leaded glass and the arched way with stone carvings. There is no hope for the man who does not carry away a strong impression of Antwerp.

At Harwich I sold my bicycle, repaired my wardrobe until I looked neat and trim, then, after dividing my money to permit of a day's sustenance and sight-seeing at Antwerp and having bought a second-class steamer ticket to that port, I found myself in a frame of mind as hopeful as that of one for whom the night is past and the dawn come. There is no better purifier and quickener than a bath and a good meal and a margin of twenty-four hours. Thereby a man gains strength of body, strength of mind, strength of heart. Thus equipped a youth may enter the lists, front the world, salute a century. Warrior entering battle can have no more.

Now as all the world knows, British stiffness and self-centeredness tend to break down on board a ship. Men who would be filled with horror and dismay were they addressed in the streets, or in a public conveyance ashore, reduce their fortifications and fraternize across the débris when they go down to the sea in ships. They seem to be smitten with a sacred enthusiasm for fellowship, though that enthusiasm cools as soon as they set foot on the gangplank leading them ashore. Let us say romantically that it is the instinctive utterance of the spirit of companionship in the face of the elements that possessed their forbears, Drake, Raleigh, Cavendish, and Hawkins. Or perhaps it is a sociability engendered of the theory that Britannia rules the waves, for in rulers all stiffness and angularity and discourtesy is unbecoming. Whatever the cause, Englishmen often get out of their lonely fortresses on shipboard, though rarely elsewhere.

Thus it came about that, as I stood looking out to sea, amidships, a short, stout man in a tweed suit told me that everything looked as if we might have a fine passage, and I confirmed his observations. Then he spoke of progress in navigation and marveled how old voyagers had ventured in little ships, the which, he averred, he would never have dared to do, being no mariner, although, as he disclosed, an uncle on his wife's side had been a seaman. Incidentally it appeared that Fortune had been specially generous in her dealing with him, so much so that a thriving business in the building contractor way had kept his nose to the grindstone. Even as John Gilpin he had been married twice ten tedious years, and his wife accompanied him, though, following a prescription for the avoidance of sea-sickness, she had taken to her berth as soon as she stepped aboard. They were going to "do" the Netherlands, and the journey would be the inspiration of their lives, but the only trouble lay in their lack of knowledge concerning the ways and the language of foreigners. As an Englishman, with England first in the family of nations, he had learned no tongue but his mother's, a speech, he held, full of dignity and honor. However, they would engage a courier and interpreter of proven fidelity, one highly civilized. Hearing that, I began secretly to plan social relations, telling myself that the means heaven sent must be seized and not neglected.

"Me, I'll tell any man's character at a glance," he said, then launched into instances showing how his neighbors and associates had been struck with admiration because of his skill and acumen and penetrating insight in character reading. He explained something of his system. He found on me certain bumps that revealed my integrity, my business ability, my reverence for established things, my arithmetical powers, my strong sense of justice. That his picture did not at all correspond with my estimate of myself mattered not at all. "You do not know yourself," he declared. "*Nossy teripsem*, young man. *Nossy teripsem*." He translated: "That means, know thyself!"

So, standing crystal clear before him, there seemed to be no purpose in hiding my secret plan. I told him of my knowledge of the Netherlands, how I stood unattached, how I would be willing to act as guide and interpreter for two weeks. . . . So I became attached, as it were. A social organization leaped into being. I slipped into the rôle of preceptor and friend. And immediately something of delight fell away from me. The man who had been a pleasant and amusing companion became a nuisance. I looked out upon the broad Scheldt, all gray-blue under a sunny sky, and might have enjoyed the scene; but there were my two charges most resolutely bent upon admiration, and their determined enthusiasm annoyed me. They hovered about me. They put too many questions. They were too eager for instruction. Then there was all that traveling paraphernalia: portmanteaux, hat-boxes, traveling rugs and tartan lightly strapped, a telescope, many supplementary bags, two camp stools, a small medicine chest, two leather trunks, a spaniel (it mysteriously disappeared), a folding canvas bath, a bundle of a parasol and two umbrellas and three walking canes, a dispatch box, and three coats of various weights, one of them a large ulster with many capes.

Mr. Lewis turned a grave eye on me and said that he had been properly outfitted. "Me, I do things with a sweep," he said. "I give Marshall and Snelgrove a free 'and. 'Ow about your outfit?" he said.

"Travel light. Buy as needed," I said.

"That's your business ability," he told me. "That's them bumps over your eyes. They tell the tale. Now me, I'd be prevented from doin' that by my bumps of caution which is 'ighly developed. Caution an' observation. Them's my traits."

Those powers of observation upon which he prided himself worked in a curious way. I have seen him wave off some volunteer guide and explainer, the sort that hang about in every European place of interest, doing the rejection with quite magnificent disdain and in the manner of one who would be alone with his thoughts in order fully to appreciate the marvelous hints of loveliness in tower and cloister and balustraded balcony. Anyone might have taken him for a thoroughly enraptured beholder lost in perception of beauty, drawing strength to the spirit. But in the inner heart of the man was another enthusiasm altogether different. The seeing of strange things lit a kind of fire in him. Cost data occupied him. He priced things, the stone, the cement, the labor, all to the end that he could occupy his mind with an imaginary contract out of which he might make a phantom fortune. He amused himself with a sort of unemotional classification. He jotted down in notebooks and on his shirt cuff data of the hallway of the town hall at Mons, data doubtless quite insufficient because of changed values, and as he did so made running commentary, considering things in modern fashion.

"Them beams now, up in the ceilin', you see how they been worked. We'd never 'a' done things that way. Must have taken good workmen a month to get 'em in that shape, trimmin' and shavin'. Wouldn't do at all to-day. No, sir! All that fine work's lost on Tom, Dick and 'arry. What would I do? I'd use rougher stuff and clap on a good veneer. It's done everywhere nowadays. . . . Take that fireplace now. I'd build one so as you'd never know the difference, with brick an' facin'. Reproduce the thing for any gentleman's estate at 'alf the price an' 'alf the time. What's more I'd 'eat the room much better with a 'eat reflector. Did they 'eat at all? Not a bit of it. Some of them grandees'd be near the fire roastin' an' toastin' their backsides, an' all the rest in the room 'd 'ave to freeze. . . . William Morris wouldn't agree, you say. Always 'arkin back to olden times. But you can't 'ark back because the world ain't goin' back any more than the world's goin' to 'ark back to our time fifty years from now. Ruskin was another 'alf-cracked chump, wantin' to 'ark back to 'and work. Where'd I be takin' a contract job for buildin' and tryin' to persuade some feller to 'ark back to wood-burnin' fireplaces? Fat lot of contracts I'd be likely to get. Or 'arkin back to burnin' witches! Or if I went to buy a shirt an' the 'aberdasher wanted me to 'ark back to 'air shirts? Eh? You got to 'ark back altogether or not at all."

"You think," he said once, "I'm what they call a Philistine. No appreciation of art, an' all that. My sort 'as to put up with a whole lot, takin' it all meek as a meacock, as the sayin' is. You'd think us a lot of loutish simpletons. But where'd be this cathedral without the builders? What'd things be like in a world of artists and writers an' archytecks? There's got to be doers and dreamers as there's got to be roots to a flower."

He waxed impatient about unimproved streets and old-fashioned houses. He wanted to widen the Rue de l'Ane at Bruges. He wanted to tear down the old houses with brick façades and to abolish the cobblestoned roadway in the Rue des Cisseaux. The shortsightedness of the Belgians, he said, was abundantly evident from the fact that they had not turned the terraces at Antwerp into a place with "'igh-class hotels an' new fashionable residences." When in the Antwerp cathedral he encountered a mild-mannered verger who spoke English, he told him in serious and emphatic voice that "instead of rattlin' the money box the church could raise a little honest cash by dismantlin' and sellin' the 'and-carved Gothic stalls." They might, he said, "put in a few 'andy chairs that could be stowed away out of sight when not wanted." I think he supposed the verger endowed with power of sale, for he offered to make a price per yard and pay cash for "all that 'and-carved stuff." You could not divest his mind of the belief that in Belgian towns and cities there were old houses, and ancient churches, and narrow and crooked streets because the people were obstinate and indolent and unimaginative. "You don't mean to tell me that Tom, Dick and 'arry *want* these old-fashioned 'ouses and things. *Want* 'em, 'ang to 'em for their beauty? Not that. It's because they ain't been progressive. They didn't vote 'em out. That's what. Look at England. We're pullin' down slums, an' old 'ouses. But wouldn't they be curiosities in a 'undred years? England knows better than to 'ang to the old-fashioned because it's quaint. That is, all except a lot of 'alf-cracked poets an' artists an' writers." For he was full of that reflex egoism called patriotism and held that England stood on star-crowned heights, her people the chosen ones of God and the heirs of the ages. As for Mrs. Lewis, she went about in a dismal kind of way making severe comments upon the cooking, upon the dress of the women, upon their folly in wearing lace on their market caps, upon their unfastidious ways. Once she palpitated, speechlessly, when she noticed and realized the purpose of the semi-lunar receptacles affixed to lamp posts in the public street. From the depressing effect of that unexpected sight she never fully recovered during the time we were together. She would have passed one of the cast-iron *cabinets d'aisances* in London streets without a second thought; but to her mind Continental immorality stood revealed by that simple and curious device.

The importance of my accidental meeting with the Lewises lay in that, because of my engagement, I became enabled to buy a first-class ticket to Accra on the Gold Coast of Africa, in a steamer carrying both freight and passengers. It was a little out of my way, but someone had assured me that from that place I would easily be able to find a sailing ship to Rio de Janeiro. In addition to my passage I furnished myself with clothing, and riding boots, and a revolver and shot gun, and a suit of romantic-looking tropical clothing, besides a very ingenious and curiously shaped leather receptacle which a merchant had assured me had been designed for strapping behind a saddle; and I, lacking experience, believed him.

As it is almost impossible to travel in luxury and to know adventure, the voyage as far as the Canary Islands is almost a blank in my mind. I remember with delight only the white-winged yachts in the Channel, a homeward-bound steamer with its decks crowded with colonists and troopers returning from India, some brown-sailed fishing smacks similar to those which had always delighted me at Brighton and Hove, the Dover cliffs and the bright green of the simple Kentish landscape, the beauty of the surge and spray, the crowded shipping going and coming; then England melted to a cloud, shrank to a blue-gray line on the horizon, vanished.

One morning, having long since grown accustomed to the beating and throbbing and muffled thumpings of the engines, I awoke with a sense of incompleteness in the world. My mind had traced back swiftly, to put things together in an understanding way before the realization came that we had anchored. Much seemed unfamiliar, the quiet, the light reflected on my cabin ceiling which had become greenish in a translucent way instead of silver, the feel of the air, the roll of the ship. So I went on deck to see the Canaries and could hardly convince myself that I looked at solid land. The mountains standing sharp against a turquoise sky had a two-dimensional appearance as if cut out of cardboard, or like stage scenery astonishingly rich in color and lit by a strong golden light. The town of Las Palmas was like an effect achieved by a scene painter, an irregular dash of white being government buildings, squares of white and blue and yellow for residences. Not until my eye took in the middle distance did things adjust themselves and take on definite proportions, and when they did I was glad and grateful to be there. It was like stepping into the pages of some enthusiastic author to see all of those swiftly moving boats with sails striped white and blue; long gaily painted boats manned by lithe rowers, containing fruits of gorgeous hue, others with bales and boxes, one with a canopy under which sat some official; a vessel standing out to sea, the living picture of one of those revenue cutters that sailed in Marryat's books; a two-masted schooner without topmasts; a scow with a rounded stem like a Dutch galiot. The memory that comes back to me concerns itself with color at first, then gracefulness; the whiteness of sail and high floating cloud; the dash of scarlet and topaz and warm orange about the boatmen's sashes and handkerchiefs; the chameleon sea of green and blue and ivory lacing; a floating nautilis, semi-transparent and crimson tipped, that sailed past; the mountain that changed from deep purple to violet, with patches of warm red edged with sapphire as the sunlight touched it to reveal gully and valley and highland. Then the grace of sailing ships, of slim boatmen, of wave and water that swirled at bow and stern. It was fine to be in so flashing and exuberant a world. Since the *Dinanderie* had to take on coal, I went ashore; there nothing attracted me so much as swimming in the sea, then, being freshened, I made a circuit of the town.

But something happened to set my plans all askew. Just as I had finished writing a letter to Maude, which I did at a table in a wineshop, and at the moment of paying my bill, a tall and straight-limbed young man with brown skin and white teeth and a pleasant smile addressed me with civility, talking first in Portuguese, then changing to indifferent French to suit my convenience. His errand being revealed with some difficulty showed that he had a boat, a sailing craft, and it had occurred to him that I might wish to sail about in it. For no more than two occupants, he was persuaded that the world held nothing more suitable, swifter, cleaner, more easily handled than his boat. He testified to his own skill as sailor, and referred me to officials, to soldiers, and especially to the innkeeper who stood by the table listening, quite like one intricately involved. It would be a wonderful romance, the innkeeper said. We could sail for an hour, a day, a week and "the heart would fly," he assured me. Nor did it avail anything for me to point out that my passage money had been paid and that I had no time for pleasure sailing. Time was made for slaves. If I lost this moment, this chance to see the Canaries, I might lose something never to be regained. As for steamers, there were others.

Playing then with the idea of seeing the Canaries I walked with the owner of the cutter, he all the while telling me of the wonders to be seen, and soon we came to the mole. No sooner did I clap eyes on the *Ferdinand* than I knew I would have to be severe with myself to continue my voyage on the *Dinanderie*. The little craft rose and fell on the gentle swell and looked like a sensitive living thing. You could see that its owner had lavished upon it all the care that a youth gives to his sweetheart. What paint and brass and polishing and cleaning could do, had been done. The deck had been scrubbed to snowy whiteness, the mast had been polished and varnished, the red and white striped sails were neatly lashed, the little cabin with ports no larger than saucers was a jewel of brightness. So what with that, and with my companion's amiability, what with the plans that he made and my weariness at being cooped up on the steamer, my mind made itself up. Finely the young man handled his craft, lightly she flew across the bay under a breeze that hardly raised a ripple, neatly he brought her alongside the *Dinanderie*, and proudly I climbed aboard as the charterer of a little ship and the master of a cruise. The second mate thought that I was doing a dangerous thing, "tying up with dagoes," and told me about a man who had disappeared while on a shore trip, but the warning fell light for I was not to be defrauded of my interior peace. The first mate wished that he could clear away complexity and be foot-loose. His ambition was to live on Fernanda Noronha, at least for a time.

2

It is not possible to describe in detail the minor adventures while we sailed in the *Ferdinand*. . . . We sailed about the islands touching Tenerife, Gomera, Hierro. We made a quick run to Fuerteventura and then to Lanzarote, where I stood on sand that had been part of the Sahara. At Tenerife I climbed the mountain to look down at Punta Rasca where Magellan had anchored, and found the ascent easy. But not so the coming down, for I went by another way I supposed to be easier, to find myself presently at a precipitous place, following narrow and winding goat paths that somehow vanished as though the mountainside had been planed down. Then I would have to turn back, sometimes going sideways with my back against the rock and my hands outspread, feeling my way until the path broadened, so that I could face round and walk again. Nor did I dare to look down because once I did so and grew alarmed at the depth of a precipice on the edge of which I stood. At one time when the path disappeared, I saw, a little way below, another path running parallel to the one I was on, but eight feet of cliff separated the two of them. I found myself highly desirous of taking the new way, fearing to creep sideways back along the path I had come because of a boulder, or a jutting place around which I had worked with difficulty. I knew that I was afraid, nervous and fearful of what might happen, not daring to look at anything but the azure sea. Then a shadow touched me and I lifted my head to see an eagle far overhead, soaring with unmoving wings, and so found myself undone. A vertigo took me and the solid mountain seemed to sway dangerously, and an astonishing rushing sound filled the world. I could only let myself shrink, crouch, with closed eyes, then, moving with extremest care, spread myself flat on the path, meanwhile bitterly deploring my foolishness. And fight as I would against what I knew to be an illusion, it seemed a most vivid fact that the mountain moved and swayed like a giant getting ready to throw me off, so that I thought I had looked my last upon the world. Then, amidst all that storm of fear, but with no cessation of the fear, one part of me became an onlooker, perfectly calm and interested in my own plight, directing action, as it seemed. That sensation is very clear in my recollection. One me watched with indifference as the other me, bitterly afraid, edged over, feet first and backward, caught and clutched with nails and finger tips to rock edge and rooted stone until I hung suspended by my hands with my face to the cliff, then let go, dropped and slid, for the cliff face was not perpendicular all the way as I had imagined, but a little sloped close to the lower path. And, having found a foothold again, the terrified half of me fled leaving nothing but minor anxieties, a consciousness of torn hands, a memory of great fear, and a wonder at having overcome difficulties. But for many nights after I would awaken in my bed full of overwhelming horror and mental anguish.

Needless to say we crossed to Africa from Fuerteventura, for I could not resist the temptation, and the little craft flew over the sunlit waters as light as a humming bird. For me it was perfect fullness of life to be at the tiller and feel the ship answer every little movement, to see the foam streaming past, to hear the music of rushing water, to feel the boat rise on a wave and hear the hum of the wind and the crack of canvas. The curve of the sail, the green-white wake, the curl of the waves, the rhythm of the motion, the gulls and curlews that played about us, the fish that leaped and raced, the light noise that was the song of the ship, these filled me with a joy that is not to be written about. For the sheer pleasure of it we ran all night, keeping a course southeast, with Africa showing presently as a low blue line against a morning sky of gold and crimson and velvet-violet, and a sea that turned to blood when an enormous red sun leaped up. So we dropped anchor south of Cape Bojador in a channel between a long island of sand and the coast, swam awhile, and then made a meal of peaches and bananas and oranges, that must have lasted for an hour and, like the foolish fellows that we were, felt sorry because we had littered the tidy water with rinds and peelings that clung to the sides of our ship. Because adventure challenged after we had set foot on Africa, swimming to shore and swimming back because we carried neither chatty nor canoe and would not risk beaching our ship, we decided that having gone so far we might go further, even to Cape Verde, where we would strike west for the islands. Indeed in our enthusiasm and pride of the ship, we spoke, more than once, of the possibility of crossing the Atlantic, and then it was that I discovered for the first time that my ship owner had a wife and children in Las Palmas. He mentioned the fact quite incidentally, then defended his reticence by saying that he did not wish to mar the trip with intrusive anxieties. For my pleasure he had kept his counsel sealed and close.

But we did not follow our plans. Instead we ran down under a good breeze to Cape Blanco where we anchored, two very hungry mariners because we had overlooked the matter of provisions. But nothing was to be had there, so, too faint to enjoy, we headed south and came to a village which we found to be Tushunin, a place built on the sand of the desert, fly-infested and strangely smelling, where a Frenchman, run degenerate and married to or living with a negress, kept what he called a trading post. It was no more than a ramshackle mud-built house of one room, thatched in a clumsy way. A little distance away on the hillside there were other houses and a few tents, but we did not go there because, having eggs and fruit, we were eager to get back to our ship. The Frenchman wished us to stay longer, not, it seemed, for our entertainment as much as for his, because he wanted to talk; but a sample of his communication showed him to be full of prejudices and senseless notions and long-since-proven lies about African explorers.

Before we reached the beach a boy offered to sell us a small bag of dates and while we traded with him a wrinkled old woman came. Then out of a little creek a Negro paddled a canoe and offered his service to take us aboard. So people appeared as flies do. But interest had gone out of us and the edge had faded out of adventure because of our hunger. Quick apprehension and lively interest are closely connected with physical well-being. So we sailed and sailed until we came to the place where we smelt the Senegal River which runs for awhile parallel to the coast, then headed for the Cape Verde Islands feeling like men a day or two from death by starvation, not talking because we were too weak to communicate conviction or throw light on facts. Thus we both saw land that might have been a cloud and knew it to be Boavista, at least I knew it for land and my companion for that island, but neither of us said a word to the other, each being utterly indifferent to his fellow's comfort. A fried beefsteak or a mutton chop would have evoked in us a tremendous capacity for admiration, would have awakened a sense of light and cultivated imagination. But hungry as we were, a city in paradise might have laid outspread without stirring our emotional activity.

However, two hours after we touched Boavista wind and earth and sea held glories for us, because we found Negroes who sold us food and made coffee, who laughed at everything and were ready to do anything for us. So we went on our way to São Vincente happily enough but prepared to dissolve our partnership. Nor did my companion journey the eight hundred miles alone, for he found a companion, a cousin, as far as I could make out.

But the adventure cost me almost all my money—would indeed have cost me more than I had, if I had not thrown in my shotgun and revolver, which I did without any mental depression; for a penniless fellow with firearms would look isolated and superior.

So for two days I looked around and enjoyed strange things and strange sights: a barber who, sitting in his chair asleep outside his shop, refused to shave me because the family exchequer held enough for the day; a woman in an inn who, bringing me boiled eggs and seeing a large spider on the wall, neatly dispatched him with the tip of one of my eggs as weapon, and after wiping the signs of the fray from the egg on her skirt set the feast before me with a pleasant smile; an interview with the purser of a steamer then coaling in the bay who offered me a passage to Antwerp in return for my services; a well sealed up because of an evil spirit supposed to haunt it, and a doctor who told me that there was precious little difference between the belief in evil spirits and the belief in typhoid-ridden water; a wealthy woman who drove about in a hansom cab drawn by a mule, the vehicle painted a glaring white with gold trimmings; a squad of bare footed soldiers; a little group of small boys and girls smoking cigars; a vision of the Atlantic from a quiet corner under a little cliff where the air held the pungent smell of seaweed and my eye followed the curve of the globe and the waves whispered and invited dreaming.

Regaining the town I stepped under a portico because of a sudden rain shower, and while I was thinking that I had never seen a place in which one could drift to eternity with less friction, a man joined me, wrinkled and gray-haired. Like so many I afterwards met of that type, weathered fellows, in spite of their years—he must have been past sixty—he walked with a stride. Health was in the very marrow of his bones and because he was ruddy-cheeked and clear-eyed and firm-chinned he seemed not ill-favored although when you looked close his nose seemed to have been battered and a scar ran across his forehead. Soon he was telling me his adventures and travels, not in any braggart way but rather as one man might tell another how he had come to that place by such and such a street and turning. He was the first I had met of that sort, and, listening, I wished him to go on and on telling his tale. As it was we spent the best part of an hour in that fashion. He had fought in the Zulu war and had known Cetewayo and one John Dunn who had been in Zulu, and for twenty years had conformed to Zulu ways. He had fought in the battle of Isandula when fifteen thousand Zulus had surprised five companies of British soldiers and killed more than eight hundred. How he had flown to Burma he did not make clear, but there he had been when all Mandalay turned to massacring, and next he turned up in Canada at the time of the Louis Riel rebellion but left for Africa in an attempt to join Stanley's expedition, though in that he failed, having "got into trouble" at Cape Town. Then Cape Town led him to other reminiscences, for he had been there when Livingstone was trying to buy oxen for his journey across the desert to Linyanti and almost trying in vain, because traders engaged in the spoliation of Africa set all stumbling blocks they could find in the way of the single-hearted explorer. MacDonald, the man with whom I talked, himself procured three oxen of the ten that Livingstone finally secured, "and sorry beasts they were," said my man. Then he added this, which sounded extraordinary to me then, not knowing the wandering type and thinking them incapable of the finer feelings, "The religion of the man was like a full blaze of light shining on darkness. It was a way of life, mark ye. 'Twas something contrary to cruelty an' misery," after which he dismissed the subject and began to ask me about myself. I mention this, because not once, but a dozen times and more in after years, I heard David Livingstone's name spoken with highest respect by hard cases in lawless lands though the white-souled pathfinder seems to have been forgotten by civilization.

Another direct result of my chance meeting with the expatriated Scot lay in my introduction to an official at the coaling station who sent me on board a steamer then at anchor and coaling, where I got a job as deck hand in the swiftest time on record. Such was my ignorance that I did not know whether the man I addressed was captain, mate, or bos'n.

"Want a job? Valparaiso," said he, and before I could reply he had turned away with the words, "Get busy in the bunkers," and I had to fit in as best I could. You have seen schoolboys at some game with opposing sides drag in a bystander. Or you have heard of governments sending out press-gangs to seize whomsoever they laid hands upon. It was like that.

"If you're goin' to work, work," said a fellow who looked like a pirate with his coal-smeared face and red handkerchief bound about his head. "Take the scoop or else get to hell out o' here." Then he fell to profanation in a cheery kind of way, and thus I became one of the crew. As for the little money I had remaining, that went for dungarees and the bedding called donkey's breakfast, and oilskins.

But of ocean travel on such a steamer there remains nothing to say that is new, for the tale has been told by McFee and Tomlinson and Conrad and Masefield, with marvelous precision and attention to detail. The only thing I have to add is that you must not suffer from the illusion that there is any comfort or pleasantness about fo'c'sle life in such a ship. Of course custom makes things bearable in time and in spite of conditions. No man can sit long sullenly brooding. He must arrange the apparatus of life to make things bearable, if worth his salt.

Still there were things. The fo'c'sle was filthy and bad-smelling and uncomfortable, stifling, too, as might be expected in an iron ship lying under the tropic sun. But part of the untidiness was mended before we steamed out of the bay, for someone with authority real or assumed ordered me to get busy with broom and bucket. Who he was I did not then know. What he said was this: "Put your duds in the top bunk, port side, then clean out that pig hole and look sharp about it." Later I discovered that he, a fellow named Norris, had made a pier-head jump and was nobody in particular, indeed, ranking lowest in order on that ship until I came. He assumed the attitude of power and guided authority into his own hands as men have done since the world began. So presently a little warfare broke out between the two of us, a hidden slave revolt that became a Roman holiday for the others, for we in time settled the question of supremacy by a glove fight that went two rounds, the battling done with a certain energy and a richness of spirit, our ring the main hatch, our gloves canvas stuffed with oakum fashioned indifferently well by the carpenter. Painful things befell us both, and luck more than skill settled the matter. Norris accepted his old position quite cheerfully.

That, however, is getting a little ahead of the story, for the battle was fought on the day we crossed the line, and by that time my unfavorable impressions of the ship had lost their sharp edge. But the first sharpness of them was painful. You see I had come out of clean and healthy surroundings and an alert life, and stepped into the fo'c'sle to discover two diseased men doctoring themselves. That gave me a big shock. As for sociability, it seemed impossible for a long time. Where conversation was concerned, the men seemed obsessed with sex, though that attitude I afterwards found might well be called an affected one, a kind of habit. I had expected, too, some interesting moments hearing sailor songs and chanties, but the men were as songless as so many bank clerks. I make an exception in the case of Spotted Joe, rapscallion, ne'er-do-well, black sheep of a decent Irish family who became a chanty man when he discovered that much in the way of laziness and ineptitude was passed over if a man could sing a good song, or play a tune on accordion or whistle, or tell a good yarn. So Joe, moved by self-interest, set to work to establish a reputation for himself, and I mention him because collectors of ballads and sea songs and folk songs are sometimes considerably muddled about origin and variants. Joe improvised with facility, and, seeking applause, found that the easiest way to it lay by way of bawdy suggestion and free use of the language of venery. Chanties, limericks, ballads were picked up by him to be frilled and adorned without scruple. He hung obscenities to everything. He showed himself to be a very repertory of viciousness. He wallowed in sensuality.

For instance, the donkey-engine man, who hailed from Cheshire, knew one song and one only, which he crooned to himself on all occasions. It was an innocent enough ballad, quite uninteresting, which began

When I was single, O then,
When I was single, O then,
When I was single my pockets did jingle,
I wish I was single again.

The eight or nine stanzas related how the hero became a widower and a married man soon after, to regret his experience.

The ship's crew might have heard it as an effective lullaby had not Joe seized upon it and added stanzas born of a magnificently obscene imagination. Out of the song went the good-humored yokel and in came a roisterer of coarsest grain full of coarse illusions and given to abominations, brutish as Caliban; out went everyday incidents and in went swinishness and filthiness and goatishness and Yahooism. So the song as amended rode on the top wave of popularity to be sung on schooners and coasting ships along the Chilean and Argentine seaboards, and with it many another similarly embroidered, nor would fo'c'sle men have accepted the song in its original purity had it been offered. Joe had hit that standard of taste. Doubtless some day trained and conscientious collectors of ballads will find themselves puzzled to account for the existence of variants.

We had one greasy pack of cards and not so much as an accordion; the canned beef, which we called Harriet Lane because of a fancied resemblance to the flesh of a murdered woman of that name, we dumped overboard as soon as it was handed out from the galley; and the ship rolled and rolled as though she would crack her masts at the roots of them because the well-deck had been filled with coal at Cape Verde to carry us through the Straits of Magellan and to Valparaiso. As for my activities, day by day the stream of them broadened and thickened as this man and that laid off in sick bay. I played coal trimmer down in the bunkers, poking and shoveling in a sliding and tumbling dungeon, bruised and choked and sweating and always hungry and thirsty, with a thirst that could not be quenched by drinking gallons of distilled sea water that tasted of rubber. I put in a watch or two down in the furnace room, under the baleful eye of a shocked and indignant boss who vituperated furiously until I learned to balance a shovel of coal, watch the roll of the ship, then discharge the load into the fiery furnace without spilling it near the door, or striking the side or dumping it too far back, the while my veins throbbed and my breath came quick and sweat poured from me in a way I never had believed possible. . . . I helped once or twice to straighten up the lazaret and because of my great hunger stole cans of preserved fruit and sardines and a jar of honey, which I shared with Albert Seastream, a Norwegian who said his prayers every night and read in his Bible, not in any fantastic or sentimental way but as a real joy. I helped up aloft, greasing blocks and lending a hand to Chips; once I worked for half a day down in the shaft tunnel; often in the galley. Betimes I was look-out man, painter, cocoa brewer to the fo'c'sle, sail mender, substitute cook, steward's assistant, anything and everything, my greatest care being not to make the same mistake twice. And I learned to take a turn at the wheel, to reef as far as one may on a sailing steamer, to knot and splice, especially to learn that the worst thing of all where men are together is to be a "belly-acher," or a grouch, or conscious of one's own importance, or "to wear a dying-duck-in-a-thunderstorm" expression, or to be inattentive when an old man holds forth, or to whine, or to be self-absorbed, or to be indignant when taken down a peg or two, or to ask questions by way of being noticed, or to propound views on religion, or to make others a safety valve for ill humors, or to be a professional pessimist, or to be unable to carry one's cross and hold one's tongue, or to be combative, or to be too narrowly patriotic, or to be despondent. You can be as sentimental as you please about your mother, but not about your sweetheart. You can tell a good thumping lie which everyone knows to be a lie, but you must not tell a half lie to shield yourself. You can tell tales of adventure, but woe betide the man who presents himself as the hero in them! You can have your private sorrows and welcome, but Lord help the man who casts the shadow of grief upon others. You may have your high aims, but you must not affect superiority over others. You may have your opinions but you must not be controversial. You may be preoccupied as much as you please, but you must not fail with a morning word and a "good-night." You may differ but you shall not scoff or deride. You may disapprove openly, but you shall not sulk. Above all, there had to be order, with a place for everything and everything in its place. So in such a little world, where men were close confined, complications and intricacies were avoided, and that gritty irritation which plagues men thrown in each other's company was reduced to a vanishing point.

Of all that ship only Albert Seastream rests in my memory, and it was the neatness and cleanness of him that first attracted me. Gentle of speech, kind of manner and often smiling, always doing something when off watch such as wood carving or fashioning things out of rope, he stood out clearly from the rest. Also, strange doing, he prayed, though he regarded prayer as a kind of habit like washing or like shaving regularly. Strangely too he knit sailor superstitions into the day's work and found them good. To knock three times on wood when boasting was, he held, a salutary habit, because it recalled a man to caution who might aptly be given to over-confidence. To walk under a ladder could be nothing but a danger at the best of times, so why not call it bad luck and be done with it? To spill salt certainly brought sorrow because it implied a carelessness with food. Once we saw the mirage of a sailing ship and he told me that it was the Flying Dutchman and presaged a storm. Contradicting in self-conscious superiority I said things about atmospheric pressure and optical illusions that often went before heavy weather, and, half humorously, half seriously, he told me that it was all the same by whatever name it was called. "We call it the Flying Dutchman and know that it means trouble. What's the difference in the long run? Either way man gets out of his indifference. That's the main thing."

And the predicted heavy weather came after a morning of gloom, with a yellow-white fog and a rising sea, at first a sullen heaving sea to which the *Akaba* rose, so we became confident and praised her sea qualities, saying that she would ride anything. Then the gloom cleared somewhat and the sun turned to a faintly luminous body, while reddish-black clouds flew furiously across the sky, at first in torn fragments then in great masses. We who were greenhorns became alarmed, though we hid our fear and wondered how went the mind of the man on the bridge. Wondered more when the sea no longer came in waves, but in confusion and a sort of growing rage. The air seemed full of shriekings, and the ship trembled when the screw lifted out of the water so that it seemed as if the engines must wrench themselves to pieces. It was as if we labored in a boiling cauldron while the world grew darker, until of a sudden the whole sky broke into lightning flashes like cascades of white fire, and by those flashes we saw black hills of water that threatened us fearfully when we rushed down slopes to meet them. Once we did not rise quickly enough, but hung, hesitating, and a sea broke over us that cleared the coal from the well-deck, many tons of it, as feathers are swept before a wind. One of our boats tore loose too. When we rose again, the water racing white from us, there was Norris washing about helplessly in the scuppers, swept from port to starboard and starboard to port again, sometimes making feeble efforts to regain his footing. So Lucas and Seastream and I got down to him, though not at our first attempt because of a second and lighter sea that broke over us and almost filled the well-deck so that it seemed as if the hurt man would go overboard. By the queer way in which his arm hung we knew it to be broken, and he lay so still that we thought him dead until we caught his low moaning. All the while the mate roared at us for our slowness. But we managed to hoist him up, others helping above, Seastream somehow taking the poor fellow's head under his arm and Lucas shouldering the inert body, while I, below, tried to look useful but all the while wished they were quicker, being fearful of the threatening black water slopes up which I looked sometimes to the sky. Just as I laid hand on the rail, the way being clear of men and the ship leaning heavily to port but commencing to right again, one of those hills rose and rose and still rose, then curled over and hung suspended, shutting me in a cave of water that closed about me, tore me from my hold, lifted and swept me, so that in a flash I saw nothing but boiling waves and knew that I was overboard. But, also, there rested in me an infinitesimal spark of hope. Then my breath was crushed out of me and I knew that I was fast held against the rattlings by the pressure of the wave, but still I recall the shadow of fear that came on me lest the whirling water turn me and take me from the holding net. With the release of pressure I half lowered myself, half fell to the deck. And, after all, a bruised forehead was all the damage. Harrison, the mate, said, "Lucky for you. Anyone who can't hold on better didn't ought to go to sea," which struck me as unfeeling and obtuse. Nor did I find any sympathy in the fo'c'sle. Everyone seemed to take it lightly, and someone told the old, old, very old tale of the captain who let a man drown, but hove to and sent out a boat in mid-Pacific for his washed overboard hencoop. "An' our ol' man'd be just such another," declared Kelley. "When you look at it, you ain't so much. No one is. It's one less to keep and feed and pay off at the end of the trip." Remembering Harrison's words I felt an anti-capitalistic urge, but said nothing.

Still not a week had gone by when events showed the popular theory not supported by facts, and shipowners and captains to be of a much maligned class. Seastream fell overboard one misthung evening, in the middle of the second dogwatch, nobody knew how, but being near I threw overboard a life buoy, then saw his bald head not more than fifty yards from it. Next came all the strange business of attempted rescue, the ringing of engine bells, the silence when the engine stopped, the lowering of a boat into which four of us and the third mate went; our dropping astern and swift losing sight of the ship because of the sudden thickening of the fog, then our being alone on the South Atlantic. Our horizon had shrunk to ten feet and in that world we rowed, getting nowhere, seeing nothing but one another, hearing nothing but the deep and hollow ululation of the steamer's horn every minute, but unable to judge from which direction the sound came. Though we lay on our oars and listened intently we were at variance as to the steamer's position and our united shoutings seemed feeble as whispers. When night fell it was moonless and we could not see the stars. We knew that the steamer was circling about us, and once we were so close we found ourselves tossing in its wake. Another time through a hole in the fog we made out for an instant the mast headlight but nothing else. It might have been a moving star. Three of us saw it, but for so short a spell that we could not agree upon the direction in which it moved. Yet alone on the dark world of waters some of us began to chatter nothings.

"And me just about to take my cocoa when I heard the engine bell. 'Stop!' says I, to Pete. 'What's up now?'" Thus spoke a sharp-faced man, Bird by name.

The mate sat silent.

"If I had a nip of whiskey I'd stave off this here thirst," said a man behind me.

I think that Seastream had passed out of the minds of all of us by that time. We might have passed him or the buoy without seeing either. We were not callous, but our own plight occupied us entirely. If we thought of Seastream at all, it was in a reminiscent way, a mellowed memory as of one lost years before. So when the man spoke of his nip of whiskey, another said, "Seastream never drank anything." Another said, "The best hand at splicing I ever seen," and his name was not mentioned after that.

Hour after hour we did nothing, merely paddling, hoping to keep in the same spot and be picked up, fearing to pull in case we got outside the circle we supposed the *Akaba* to be making. I think that we became accustomed to hearing the foghorn, just as a man becoming accustomed to the sound may no longer hear the clock chiming the quarters though it goes on persistently in the room in which he sits. Looking back it seems to me to be remarkable that presently we began to tell one another tales of terror, as about a giant octopus that flung an arm over a boat to pick off men, about boats run down in the night by their own steamers, about a drowned man who followed for days in the wake of a ship, about seamen abandoned in some such plight as we were then in.

"If we don't pick 'em up by morning, what then?" asked Bird, questioning the mate.

"Keep goin' west," he said, grouchily it seemed.

"Where'd we hit then?" asked another, and I thought it strange that they who had sailed so long knew so little of geography.

"Brazil, or thereabouts," answered the mate, like one from whom information was forced. He took a chew of tobacco, then looked into the fog, and I thought of Henry Hudson.

"Rio, maybe?" continued the questioner behind me. I supposed him inexplicit because of lack of knowledge.

The mate grunted. "South," he said. "Nearer Montevideo," and I felt sure then that his reticence grew out of haziness.

"How far?"

"Maybe a matter of five hundred or six hundred miles. Don't rightly know. Maybe more or a good deal less. Maybe less." Then he strained to listen, trying to locate the foghorn.

"And not so much as a keg of water," went on the man. "If I'd a nip of whiskey I'd be able to stave off this here thirst. How would a bottle of ale go? There ought to be something to drink on every boat. Board of Trade rule."

With that remark there was general concurrence, then a long silence. Hours long, it seemed, with nothing to break it except the bumping of oars against rowlocks, the splash of the blades, the ripple of water against the boat's side and the thump when we came down after lifting on a low swell. The foghorn boomed dismally, more and more distant it seemed to me, as though we had drifted out of the proper latitude, or perhaps as though the *Akaba*, despairing of finding us, had left to follow her course and was moaning farewells.

"Skinny Nate'll be blowin'," observed Bird, but it seemed impossible to believe that only minutes separated the hoarse calls. I felt angry that the mate seemed so unconcerned, for he almost looked complacent and contented as he chewed his plug, until I came to the conclusion that he was a man without imagination or experience, except on shipboard in routine duties, and could not be expected to know what desertion on the high seas entailed. His apparent bravery was born of ignorance, whereas fear grew out of knowledge and the remembrance of cases read in books and newspapers. I recalled the case of the *Mignonette* in which a boy was killed by the captain, and the body eaten by the men after they were twenty days adrift.

"A rum-hot's as good a thing for thirst as I ever found," said Fisher, so leading to a discussion of the merits of different drinks. Then came another long silence. I became conscious of the fact that it was so dark that the mate looked shadowy.

Presently, "Talkin' about rums-hot," said Fisher, "reminds me of a yarn about a octopus, the giant octopus, how it threw an arm over a boat an' picked out a man. Came for another soon after. Then another. All except one was took."

"There's strange things in the sea," said Bird. He went on to tell again of the dead man that swam in the wake of a ship for four days. That led to other sea tales of terror: the schooner discovered to be tenanted by rats that had eaten the crew; the brig that came down from the north in full sail, her crew frozen stiff; the ship with a crew of raving maniacs who pointed aft, their faces distorted by terror, when a rescue party boarded them—a mystery that none of them ever explained. Then came pleasant and wild theorizing about sinful things of the sea, and tales of battles with monsters such as sand-sharks, shovel-nose sharks, malevolent turtles, sting rays, tiger-sharks, saw-fish and gigantic blue whales that played battering ram against stout ships for days on end until the very masts were shaken loose. Everyone enjoyed the horrors, both the hearing and the telling, no one stood as hero in any adventure or had witnessed extraordinary incident, but stood ready to vouch for the truth because of the veracity of "a fellow in the *Mary Jane* I know as well as I know myself," or, "it was Robin who seen it, and you know Robin who's got that pub on 'Igh Street in Cardiff," or, "one of the best men ever stepped on board of a whaler who won't talk 'cept to a close friend," or, "Joe, who runs a joint in Valparaiso, as straight a man as ever I clapped eyes on."

The mate sat still as a statue letting the yarns run in at one ear and out at the other, saying nothing at all until Bird began to grumble, and to say that we were headed wrong, and to declare that he must take a rest or drop from sheer exhaustion, whereupon the mate opened his mouth and spoke, mounting in a flame of profanity, bull voiced. He became a strong-lunged, whole-hearted denouncer of "soft- 'anded blatherskites."

"Meanin' me?" asked Bird, truculent.

"Meanin' you," retorted the mate, "or any other who talks about givin' in and bein' played out." Bird, it seemed, according to the mate, was the sort to bring a ship and crew to ignominious ruin. A man worth his salt would struggle on in feebleness but never collapse in despair. A carping and complaining fool was a Jonah, not fit for everlasting darkness, much less the company of men. The stream of his profanity broadened and thickened. Bird might be as gloomy as he chose, but he had no right to impose his gloom on decent men. "It'd lower any man's self-respect to be in a boat with the likes of you," said the mate. With a final corruscating burst of blasphemy he tore a corner from his plug of tobacco and said no more, except that he made a parenthetical remark a few minutes later to the effect that what he really thought of bellyachers was too great for mortal ears to hear.

We discussed Plimsoll marks for a little while after that, Bird brooding and taking no part. When argument arose as to why the lead line for the Indian Ocean in summer should be so much higher than the mark for winter in North Atlantic, he observed, "Some of us ain't supposed to have opinions," and thereafter wrapped himself in silence. Once we heard, faintly, the six bells of the middle watch, whereupon we all set up a shout. After that, for no reason at all, we were confident that we would be picked up in the early part of the morning watch when the mist would disappear with the rising sun. And at two bells the mist thinned, rose, and there, much more distant than we had supposed, lay the *Akaba*. The sound of the single short blast was music.

"Ahead, half!" said Fisher, quoting the bridge dial.

And when we were aboard again, Chips, complaining, said to some of us, "You're a hell of a lot of seamen, you are. Do you keep your eyes where the seats of your pants blinds 'em? Keepin' us hangin' about all night. Served you right if we'd 'a' left you to shift for yourselves." The cook also had something to say, for there we were, "eatin' a double lot and puttin' all that work on the galley." Did we think we were at sea to admire the scenery or what? What were we doing anyway? Sticking about waiting for something to happen? So the impression deepened that the whole business resulted from our negligence. It seemed to be conceded that in some mysterious way we had been responsible for the loss of the coal.

CHAPTER II

Lawless Lands

I

AT LAST I set eyes on the Strait of Magellan on a gray day with no sun, and with a cold wind and sometimes lashing rain. The picture was one done in sad grays and muddy-yellow, somber and overwhelming—a gray sea white-flecked, a gray-yellow land to the south with gray-yellow sand and low cliffs that melted into gray mist. That was Tierra del Fuego, the unexplored, a land of mystery, a land where as it was said the most degraded creatures of the world shot poisoned arrows and ate human flesh. And northward lay Patagonia, cold and cheerless, gray and dirty-yellow with cliffs rooted in white surf, and a hill mist-veiled and ghostly looking, and the mournful noise of sea birds the only sound to be heard; another unknown land, a land of giants and condors and burned-out volcanoes and eagles and pumas, the gateway to the Andes. Sad too was the sea we sailed, sad and uneasy and troubled, streaked with snaky kelp, a sea with no warmth or joy in it, nor majesty, nor anything but comfortless melancholy. Soon the straits narrowed so that we slid between encompassing walls, where, through rifts in the mists we caught sight of a desolate, gray-yellow landscape, and of gray gullies, and saw once the fleeting shadow of a schooner. The straits opened out again and the land to the south fell away until it became indistinguishable from cloud; then, soon after, the north land too vanished. A wraith of a promontory swam into view, wild and bare, for we were very close and could see better since the mist had somewhat cleared. Then came an island, and another, and another.

"That's where Drake landed," said the cook, indicating one of the islands, full of British pride in his hero. The name he named made me think of other explorers, men with swords and bucklers, with daggers at their belts, who had ventured there, and my mind dwelt on the pleasing picture of those lusty fellows in council in that place. I found myself amazingly desirous of being on the island and began secretly to plan escape from the ship. I came to attention hearing the cook talking on and on, throughout his discourse strange patches of information appearing in a mass of nonsense. "We had fellows aboard, passengers who'd been explorin' 'round. It used to be a convict settlement down at Punta Arenas where we coal. May be yet for all I know. There was some dago or other trying to make himself King of Patagonia. Back in the country they say there's wild horses and all that. It's the sayin' as I've heard, that they won't let white men go there. They say that where the white man goes the grass dies and the animals die. Most god-forsaken place in the world, Patagonia. Look at it for yourself."

I found myself wondering about that story of the King of Patagonia, even hazarded a question.

"No one with sense ever's been in the place," answered the cook.

"Nobody in it but convicts, Chilean convicts," added Chips. "On the Lamport and Holt line we took a fellow to Liverpool who'd made a fortune gold diggin' somewheres. Mike something-or-other. In Liverpool he hired a carriage and two horses and went about big as Billy-be-damned. Told me his history."

Again I wanted to know more and again found myself in a cul-de-sac.

"I wouldn't set foot in Patagonia for ten bags of gold," declared the cook. "More shipwrecks there 'ave been in these straits than anywhere except 'round Singapore. There may be treasure finders, old Spanish stuff and all that. Still who wants to go about among a surly lot of Dagoes? Stick a knife in a man's back soon as look at him. Natural, being escaped convicts, and Chilean convicts at that. Then the Indians. Shootin' poisoned arrows. You'll see 'em in the straits lower down. Naked as Adam. Squatty like, they are. They jabber. Tierra del Fuego it's called and means Land of Fire. Vollacanos."

"Don't ever get it into your head to go there," warned Chips.

Somehow it seemed to me then that I was being browbeaten, or bullied, or scared, or argued, or wheedled against doing the very thing I wanted to do. Cook and carpenter seemed to be leagued together for the Public Degradation of Patagonia. "I'm tellin' you," said Chips, as if from the wealth of accumulated experience. "A sulky lot of bastards, them natives who crowd round the ship in Smith Channel when you anchor."

Then the second authority took up the tale, "Sulky's the word," he said. "I heard tell of a ship's cook who put strychnine in the cakes and gave it to 'em in exchange for otter skins. It's not the sort of thing I'd do myself, but there you are. But then these natives do take up a lot of room what a white man'd use, when you come to think of it. There's the Zulus, for instance."

"My brother got wounded in the Zulu war," said Chips, and so the two of them went into historical matters, for such was their style, rugged and abrupt, leaping like lightning from point to point.

In spite of all that, I wanted to set foot in Patagonia. I wanted to know something of Tierra del Fuego. The living there might be hard, but one would have lived at first hand. It would be getting away from all my entanglements with the past. Then a silly vanity took me, and it whispered that it would be a splendid thing to write to Maude from Patagonia. And to date a letter from Tierra del Fuego would be extraordinary. So, when we had the *Akaba* alongside the great iron coal hulk, and while Portuguese laborers were filling our bunkers by torch light, for it was night, I approached the second mate and told him of my desire to go ashore, and, if necessary, to surrender what pay might be coming to me if I could take away what clothes and dunnage I owned.

To which he answered: "You get to hell out of here and turn in. You signed on to Valparaiso and to Valparaiso you go. Think we're a pleasure steamer?" So there I was, deprived of and forbidden that freedom on which I had set my heart. Constituted authority spoke and I became nothing but a captive shorn of individuality, my cherished ideals gone smash.

"Look at me," he went on. "Where'd things be if me and all the rest of us wanted to cut off at every port? Eh?" Thus confronted with something I was supposed to admire and finding it other than admirable I made quick decision. Some workers were getting into a boat on the port side of the coal hulk, as I saw by the light of the torches, but the boat I could not see because of the pitchy dark, though I looked over and strained my eyes. There was a great hullabaloo of talk and laughter, Spanish talk, and, attracted by the air of happiness, or at any rate of joviality, without more ado I followed a lively inspiration and clambered down into the boat. By all expectation I should have been questioned, but was not. The man at the bow oar seeing me said something which I did not understand, something I took for an ordinary remark. Soon the word *desertor* detached itself from the rest and I answered "*Sí.*" Then he dropped into broken speech, trying his best, and said:

"*Bueno*, you *marinero;* pull lak 'ell. *Remo*. Work plenty hard. *Andar con la marea.*"

I made out somehow that it would be all right if I worked my passage and that there must be no loafing at the oar on account of the tide, so I set my back to it and found everything pleasant enough. Presently we hit sandy bottom, pulled high the boat, the men went their ways into the night and I stood alone in the dark on the Patagonian shore, my possessions all that I stood up in, penniless. But a sense of joy was in me. I remember that perfectly well. I remember as I lay in the sand on the lee of the boat, that for the first time I was out of the elaborate organization of artificial life. I had escaped from the machine. There were a thousand paths to be trodden and I found myself free to choose. I could aim at fullness of life and not vacuity. I could come to deserve my own respect because I would earn my own living at first hand, somehow. I would leave behind all that débris among which I had been wandering, all that quoting of other men, all that following of beaten tracks, all that gush about the welfare of my fellow man, all that humiliating obedience to constituted authority. I would live life on my own terms. I would find by study of myself and of the ground I stood on what my combined inward and outward capability was. At that point I felt in my pocket and found my only book, *Sartor Resartus,* safe and sound. On the verge of falling asleep the cook's words came to me: "Convicts. Surly lot of fellows. Stick a knife in a man's back as soon as look at him." But why should anyone knife a penniless man? The reflection came as a comforting one, so pleasant that I fell asleep to wake quite refreshed, though ravenously hungry, with the dawn. And my first thoughts were, "Well, no one murdered me."

2

I bathed in the sea then took a cast around the place.

It was not much of a town, Punta Arenas; a couple of cobblestoned streets, many shabby one-storied corrugated-iron built houses, a long, white painted government building and a jail; a few shacks that proclaimed themselves to be hotels; grog shops; a treeless plaza; a little store with gin and whiskey bottles in the window which announced on a sign:

ROPA INGLEAS DE TODAS CLASES
(Englisch Close all Class)

although looking again through the window which gave on the whole shop, I saw nothing but an antiquated silk hat. After rambling about the settlement and while I was passing the jail, I heard someone calling, and, looking at the barred window saw a face, most majestically German. Setting the man right as to my nationality, for he had thought me to be Scandinavian, I asked him what I could do for him, whereupon he threw out a silver coin, then begged me to go to a certain house, which he described, and bring him a cup of coffee. He had, he told me, been arrested by the soldiery the night before for drunkenness, did not know when he would be tried, nor whether he would be released. That which was uppermost in his mind was that he suffered terribly from thirst, and a cup of coffee with a liberal dash of brandy seemed the only proper assuaging drink. Doing what he asked me to do, I went through the deserted streets and discovered the house he described, one in which a young Chilean woman lived. She was up and about, and heard my story while she smoked a cigarette, leaning the while against the doorpost, though only sketchily dressed in a petticoat. That was my first sight of a half-nude woman and her pendulous breasts half-fascinated and half-repelled me, my notion of the figure of women being based upon conventional art. Under the dress of every woman, I thought, lay a perfect figure, trim and graceful as Walter Crane's classical maidens in Morris's book, *The Doom of King Acrisius.* But her open generosity scattered all disappointment, for she set before me coffee and crisp bread, thickly buttered, and a cake of cheese made from goat's milk, to which I addressed myself handsomely, then carried the meal she prepared to the jail. And while Myers drank he was heavily garrulous, interesting too, though early in the course of the interview a soldier with a drawn sword came, who signified that I would conduct my visit from the roadway leaving the sidewalk clear. Since he was a mild-mannered man with good-natured eyes, authority bore no offensive look.

Myers instructed me as to Patagonia and I discovered, to my amazement, that he had been in the land for thirty years, that it had been crossed and crisscrossed time and again by adventurers, that already along the coast but not inland there existed a growing industry in sheep and cattle raising, which industry was on the point of spreading to Tierra del Fuego, "a land of bloodiest adventure what with poxy Indians and all them," said Myers, waving his pannikin to illustrate. With three men he had brought sheep from the province of Buenos Aires through Rio Negro, and Chubut, and Santa Cruz and so to Gallegos where the owner of them had settled, and the journey through the desert and over the mountain had taken them a little more than a year, yet he spoke of it in a most matter-of-fact way.

"The two Scotchmen with us they got the pox," he said, "but otherwise all went well, and that they'll never get shut of."

That which struck me as tragic he dismissed as hardly worth notice, then went on to elaborate his tale, telling of Gauchos with long knives, of ostrich and huanaco and puma hunts, of days of hunger and days of thirst, of mighty fights and mighty drinking bouts. When he came to a pause I said that I would be happy could I know something of such a life, and he came out with this:

"Well, you can, my son. There's Bob Gillies now. He's on his way down with a big flock, and he'll be somewheres in lower Santa Cruz about now, on his way to Provenir in Tierra del Fuego. They'll be the first sheep there."

That set me on fire and I plied him with questions as to distance and direction and the getting of food, all of which he assured me would give me no concern at all. "A man can't get lost if he goes in one direction. It's them that change their mind as come to grief. As for eating, there are shanties here and there. As for getting on the road, here I am in prison and can't ride. You can take my horse. It's behind the *pulperia* kept by the Basque. Use it to Rio Negro where you leave the sea beach and strike into the pampas. Turn it loose when you get there and it'll come back." He added, "You can ride bareback and use a *bequado* so there won't be any trouble about horse gear."

I shall never forget my amazement at that offer to a penniless unknown, but I soon came to know the open-handed liberality and hospitality on the frontier everywhere. Narrow selfishness and suspicion, I soon came to discover, are outgrowths of a crowded population and concomitants of precarious livelihood.

The Basque was easily found and made no demur to my request. The gear, not the horse, was the important thing, and he held it as security for debt incurred for liquor.

"This My-aire," he said, "he call all time for tots. My God! Visk, cognac, the chin, ajenco, Gringo beer. Every man drink. My-aire pay then he drink his horse-gear. Forty dollar 'e drink las' night. Goddam!" I left then, and, twenty minutes later, was clear of Punta Arenas and riding along the shore of the Strait of Magellan in search of a flock of sheep somewhere in Patagonia.

3

Nothing, I thought, could be lonelier than the stretch of beach between Punta Arenas and Cape Negro as I saw it that day, what with the wind-swept shore, the low stunted trees, the stony way, the black and mussel-laden rocks and the kelp-ridden sea. Yet a lightheartedness possessed me so that I often sang as I rode. My growing appetite I staved off with mushrooms and mussels until my stomach revolted. Then, arrived at Cape Negro, I turned the horse loose, hardly believing it possible that the animal would find its home. My way onward was clear, because the Indian trail of six or seven parallel tracks ran straight. Nor did the shadow of depression come until near nightfall when my hunger weakened me, whereupon I lay down in the grass as a wild animal might have done. But I suddenly remembered that a little way ahead ran a depression in the land so I suspected a stream. It was more of a certain knowledge than a suspicion, and for me it was the first indication of a kind of instinct by which men know when water is near, so I arose and went on. And there lay the stream and a shanty on its bank, and from the dwelling there came four dogs, barking wildly. The noise brought a man who called off his dogs, cursing them heartily, and thus I became acquainted with that freest, best-fed, loneliest of men, the pampa boundary-rider.

That evening he and I ate every ounce of a shoulder of baked mutton, washing it down with great drafts of black coffee, filling in spare places with bread of honest heaviness in which ran dark-gray strata of unbaked dough. Then we lengthened the pleasure of the feast by finishing a left-over in the shape of a cold loin of mutton, dropping the bones to the dogs which lay about at our feet and under the table. A solitary candle served for illumination. Our seats were benches made by someone with very rudimentary notions of carpentry. The table, lacking a leg, stood propped against the wall. The stove sent out volumes of smoke at intervals, for a wind had risen, and through floor cracks, and from a broken windowpane, and from under the door a lively current of air came. But we were neither rueful nor dreary nor solemn. We knew the greatest reality in the world, unaffected intercourse. The shepherd, having exhausted topics of conversation, took a pack of playing cards, very greasy and dog-eared, and looked with vast interest at the court cards. He wanted my opinion as to whether the king of clubs or the jack of clubs wore the richer dress. Then, the time for sleep coming, McKenzie gave me a pile of sheepskins which smelled strongly of grease and mutton and were of a penetrating mustiness, and threw me a blanket most strangely horse-odorous; but I was well prepared to enjoy rather than to appraise.

About midnight we were awakened by a knocking at the door and the barking of the dogs, and by the bright moonlight saw two riders, lusty young men in ponchos and high boots and spurs, who made a great to-do shouting greetings. The newcomers were hungry and nothing would do but a meal of mutton. So the stove was replenished and kept charged until the top of it showed cherry-red; we set upon it mutton chops, and cutlets, and odd-shaped slices, all of them liberally salted and peppered. Then we stood about and ate, the while the three men discussed their doings and the activities of their friends and acquaintances, with a certain energy and richness of spirit. They were very profane in a friendly way. They passed and repassed the bottle and one being finished another was produced. As they had not yet divested themselves of their ponchos, saying that they must be on their journey a few moments after the mutton had been eaten, they suffered much from the heat and pungent smoke, so that the sweat poured from their foreheads. A babel of talk went on continually, no one listening and McKenzie sometimes bursting into song in unrestrained uproariousness. He lifted his newly replenished glass to bawl:

"Here's to the maiden of bashful fifteen,
Here's to the widow of forty"

beyond which point his memory did not serve. Nor, as the night wore on, did the noise suffer abatement. Their humor indeed became happier. They sung snatches of songs by Burns but developed a faculty for avoiding the tune. At one time a hot argument sprang up about the tartans of Scottish clans, and that led to warm words on the subject of clan badges and clan war cries, and they ran on and on until a chance remark set them off on a new tack so that they became hopelessly at odds concerning the tune called "Shean Trews" and made huge bets about it, then finally agreed to leave the decision to McLeod who lived five miles away. And, they declared, his presence would heighten the joviality if he could be induced to bring his bagpipes.

"Hear to him, man," exclaimed McKay. "He'd bring McLeod an' no' expose the fearfu' spate o' drink he's brocht."

"Wull I noo?" said Cameron, then began to empty his canvas saddlebag of the bottles it held, standing the treasures on the table. He produced square-face gin, vermouth, Irish and Scotch whiskey, brandy, schnapps, the drink called pisco, a fat bottle of absinthe, besides many more liquors that, until then, I did not know existed. He made a glittering show, and the men were like children in their eagerness of admiration, picking up a bottle to read the label, or praising the color, or mutely turning the bottle this way and that as a connoisseur in pearls might have looked at a treasure. They seemed to be almost in an ecstasy of devotion when a bottle of exceptionally good liquor was in question.

McKenzie threw the saddles on two horses and cantered off, we watching him from the doorway scattering through the creek and riding on the diagonal path up the opposite bank until he was silhouetted against the sky. Then we sat outside and smoked until he returned with McLeod and his bagpipes, and the new guest, though so recently awakened from sleep, grappled with things eagerly. The drink appealed to him as a substitute for breakfast, so he commenced by concocting a giant eggnog, beating up an ostrich egg with whiskey. You must see, in that small room, McLeod in the middle of the floor, a proud piper playing reels and strathspeys, and always on the move, three steps one way and three another, the rest of us sitting on the table, or on the bench, or standing. As tune followed tune, the Scots made it a point to call out titles, often strange and outlandish, "My Pladie's Torn," "Stumpy," "I Was Kiss'd Yestere'en," "What a' the Steer Kimmer," "Go to the Devil and Shake Yoursel'." Presently nothing would do but that thev must try a reel, so the piper put himself in the doorway and we took the floor, I for my part being pulled and pushed through the evolutions as a dummy to make up the set. "'Twas a reel in what ye might call ruined fregments," said Cameron at the close. "A Sassenach canna dance like a man, footin' it alone, but must hang to a woman. I'll do the sword dance." And he did, in a way I found attractive and exciting, with sticks for cross swords, footing it with prodigious industry and rare skill, so I came to regard it as the work of a real athlete compared with which dancing with a woman seemed the business of a weakling and a sluggard. There was beauty of execution in the work, and attention to detail and high energy and concentration. There was care in every step, in every gesture of the arms, in every snap of finger and thumb. In every movement was graceful strength.

So everything went in lively fashion until dawn, when they began to bethink themselves of the day's activities. Then I became cook while they saw to their horses, and when the animals were saddled and stood ready at the door we ate mutton and hard biscuit and French sardines which the two riders provided from their store, eating standing, and so to speak, with loins girded and staff in hand ready for flight. Then came stirrup cups and farewells, and promises to meet again, with most thorough heartiness shining through it all. I must fail in description if I do not insist upon the vigorous, wholesome sincerity that attended the parting. There was a very real sense of contact. Then my affairs came up, incidentally and parenthetically, and when it turned out that I planned to go to the Argentine and that my way and the way of McKay and Cameron would run together for a hundred miles, they offered me one of their spare horses. So when the sun came up we set forth, the horses tossing their heads and snorting, the collies barking joyously, the men riding with ease and unconscious dignity. Marking all that, noting their cheerfulness and activity, hearing their animated conversation, then remembering the fearful cargo their stomachs held, I found myself wondering at their prodigious and matchless faculty for drinking and eating, and their noble conquest over sleep. I tried to remember instances of similar cheerful vitality in the more ascetic men I had known, but vainly. These with whom I rode, their physiques of highest perfection and in touch with the spirit of earth and sun and sky in the daily life, had easily thrown off a poison that would have brought to the verge of prostration men of a city. Suddenly it came to me that I had stepped backward in point of time some three or four hundred years; back to a time when men rode horses, and wagons were a rarity; back to a time when poverty did not exist and when energy dwelt in the man; back to a time when the living world was full of interest, when the spirit of enterprise animated men, when the individual stood revealed and men were not afraid of the pleasures of life. It was a world where men were not afraid to express their opinions and where dissidence from the opinion of another would not be regarded as a sin. It was a society in which a man's freedom ceased only where it touched another man's freedom, and where the greatest crime was invasion. Prejudices were nothing. No one could be immured among conventions and received opinions. Men had the courage to think aloud. They were without affectation, frank too, and good-natured, never self-centered. It was a life where the sap ran freely. So I understood all those rude jests and coarse allusions and skirmishes of rough wit, and, understanding, came to see, as if in a flash, that Shakespeare had drawn such men as I then knew, and that a measure of his greatness grows out of the fact that he saw straight and set down what he saw. After that it gave me no shock, as it did at first, to hear one man say to another, in pleasantry and with a smile, "Why you old son of a bitch, God damn your soul, what's kept you away so long? Come in and make yourself at home. . . . To hell with unhitching your horse. I'll see to that." When I understood Patagonia I understood also Shakespeare and Rabelais.

As we rode, my delight grew and grew. A perfect sense of well being filled me, and the motion of the horse, which was spirited, affected me as if I had been endowed with new strength. I knew a fullness of life and tranquillity I had never known before. I became more and more alive to the beauty of the world with its far-stretching sea of grass, the rich glory of the distant hills, the cloud-flecked sky. The high-floating birds were a never-ending delight. When we met other riders, as we did twice, the greetings seemed to reach the last perfection of manly intimacy, with hearty clappings on the back, sometimes rough wrestling with one man pretending to drag the other from his horse, and always hospitality in the way of offering and taking a drink. Perhaps I have never known a greater moment of happiness than when we dismounted to rest and to smoke at a clear, cool spring; and I lay listening to the music of the whispering stream and to the soft munching of the horses as they grazed. My companions seemed to be the stuff of which Hakluyt's old-time adventurers had been made, steel-sinewed and arrogant, compounded of hard material. My mind played with the idea that here was true reality, unrestrained life, kinship with the world in its native wildness; and so the civilization I had left seemed to me like a slow-spreading stain of insidious disease because it robbed men of so much in the way of honesty. I remembered with something of disgust all that idle bombast about elevating the race by governmental influence and action, and I realized that suffering humanity would suffer no longer if hampering limitations were removed. I remembered all that grotesque attitudinizing and rhetoric and inflation and assumption of tremendous sentiment indulged in by poets and people in love, and it seemed to me that they were victims of mental disease. Physical perfection and real companionship seemed to me to be the only thing worth striving for. And it is certain that in those years of free wandering I assimilated something that has since made me entirely separate from life about me. For years afterwards I hungered for a companionship that I could not find. . . . Thus ran my thoughts as we sat by the spring, and as we rode, and while we lay under the stars the night before we parted at Palli-Aike.

The next day my companions set me on my way, lending me a horse that I had to return somehow and somewhen soon, after finding Gillies and his sheep. We parted where a Chilean hunter lived at a shanty that stood on the edge of a lava bed. He furnished me with hard biscuits and a piece of venison, and also taught me the art of making maté, giving me a gourd and a bombilla. So I rode on alone, no less happy than when riding in company. I saw a herd of huanaco swift and graceful, a couple of speeding ostriches, a condor hanging in the air, and they excited me so pleasantly that I feared that by some trick of fate I might be snatched back to cities.

4

At the place Waken-Aiken I came across Gillies and his sheep, some thousands of them spreading over a space of two square miles. He expressed no more surprise at my appearance than if he had expected me; while I stood full of wonderment at being in the presence of a man who had made so tremendous a journey and before whom lay another great adventure. He was hard-faced, with something of the Biblical patriarch about him. The winds of the pampas had tanned his skin to a deep mahogany, and gazing across vast seas of grass had given him a far-away look, so that he seemed not to look at but through and beyond me. He wore a poncho and a flat black hat fastened by a band that ran beneath his chin, and his pants, the bottoms of which were stuffed into knee boots, seemed wide enough for two. "I want," said I, "to go to Tierra del Fuego and will work my way."

"Aye, ou aye; ye can come wi' me to Tierra del," he said, and made a gesture with his great hand in the general direction of the South Pole; and if he made another remark for two hours, I do not remember it. But at evening, when the sheep were settling and when a half-Indian, half-Gaucho boy came it seemed from nowhere with a pack-horse, which he began to unload for the night's camp, Gillies said, quite as if his first remark had been made a moment before, "An' man, it's a puir place for a man to go to, that Tierra del, a sad, puir land. Like a body'll grow weary there. . . . A daft-like thing to do to come to Patagonia, too. A man's intellect's no well balanced that'd come here."

Remembering that, and thinking that the year spent on the pampa had steeped the man in melancholy from which he would presently free himself, I made a remark to that effect.

He answered, "I'm sore in speerit, but 'tis no' the sheep, nor yet 'tis the pampas. 'Tis that a man by folly may ruin himself in a minute. Look down ma throat."

He opened wide his mouth, made his throat barrel-shaped so that I could see his palate, then pointed out to me an ugly greenish patch the meaning of which I could not grasp until he explained. Then I understood. I saw, in imagination, that last carouse before he started on his journey, saw him with his diseased woman companion, saw him later on the plains out of touch with medical attendance and suffering. "An' mony's the ane in like case," he said. "There's poxy McAskell. There's Rudolph Ruiz with half his nose gone. But I'm told that with a woman that's clean a man may get rid o' sich trouble, so I sent an advertisement to the *Scotsman* for a wife an' one's on the way. But it put me sore in speerit from Buenos Aires down. Man, 'tis a fearfu' think to carry aboot, I assure ye."

The final words formed a sort of refrain which he repeated from time to time. The thought of his affliction burdened him sore, coming upon him sometimes at eating, sometimes about the camp fire, sometimes when we were out hunting. In the middle of the night I have heard him groan and say, "God, ye must be fou to gi' a man this for a moment's folly. 'Tis an fearfu' thing to carry aboot, I assure ye."

5

We got our sheep to the coast, then with much effort on board a schooner, and in time landed them at the eastern end of Gente Grande Bay in Tierra del Fuego; which being done, Gillies found himself minded to go with the schooner to Punta Arenas in the hope of consulting some steamer's doctor, after which he would meet me at Porvenir. I heard his plans not without secret fear, but said nothing of my doubts and qualms. Gillies assured me that it would be impossible to miss the appointed meeting place, and he felt that all must go well if I had no trouble with Indians. "Not for all the sheep in South America would I hae an arrow in me heart," he said, but expressed no concern on my account. "Wi' a keen eye you'll be richt enough," he assured me, making a pleasant business of the parting. So the schooner sailed away, and I, with the Indian boy, faced westward, driving the flock.

And we were right enough in the long run though there were moments of doubt. The boy and I took turn and turn about on guard, my watch commencing at midnight when I saw shadows in every bush and Indians in every tuft of grass because of my imaginings. On more than one occasion I caught sight of tiny glimmerings that were Indian fires, for the fire the Ooans build is no larger than a man's hand, not made for warmth though the climate is cold, but as a means of causing mussels to open.

Once the sheep being quietly bedded, being curious to see and to know, I decided to get as close to an Indian camp as possible, giving myself a couple of hours soon after midnight to do so. For caution's sake and as one might make a scarecrow, I constructed a dummy out of an old coat that Gillies had left behind, helping out with a hat of my own, then placed the figure against a bush where I had taken my post. Moving with extremest care, I made for the distant Indian fire. It took a good deal of stalking and I was never free of fear, but at last I got quite close enough to observe and actually looked down into the camp from the top of a small bluff. Sitting by the fire were three human figures, naked except for a piece of huanaco hide fastened with a thong about their shoulders and hung to windward, for the night was very cold. A little way off several forms lay huddled together. They may have been asleep, I did not discover. For, as I looked, I suddenly became startled at finding a dog sniff at my leg, and on an impulse shooed it away. That noise became my undoing, for, in a flash, I saw an Indian let an arrow fly in my direction. I did not see him fit the shaft to the string, but I did see him pick up the bow. Nor can I account for the fact that I flung my hat into the camp. Nor did I remember getting away. My conscious action came much later when I stopped in the deep shadow of a bush listening with a thumping heart. After that I made a great detour and so at last came to my flock of sheep. And there were signs of trouble enough. The sheep had scattered into huddled bunches. The Indian-Gaucho lad, evidently in sore pain, not weeping but full of fierce anger, came to me and was by turns vociferous and sullen. He had seen five Indians, he counted on his fingers as he told the tale, each walking off with a sheep. Tearing open his shirt he showed me his skin all blood-laced from the shoulder down, and the wound from which he had plucked an arrow, but not the barb of it. In the morning I had to extract the piece of triangular glass using my razor as lancet, pulling the barb from his flesh with my teeth.

6

One evening we topped a long flat hill after leaving the sheep in the little valley. At our feet lay Porvenir Bay like an amethyst in its shimmering translucent green, an amethyst set in a golden rim with an edging of silver, for the sea sand shone yellow bright, and a thin line of white where wavelets broke edged the sand. Now the MacRae shanty lay on the further side of the bay, a half mile from where I stood, in a direct line, but ten miles or more away if one followed the sea shore; and already the sun touched the western hills. So I bundled my clothes on my head, took to the water, which was icy cold, and when halfway across, MacRae, seeing me, put off in a chatty and presently I clambered aboard.

That evening as we sat in the shack MacRae planned great things, and all his plans closely involved my future. The place was a two-roomed structure, built by a man who must have done his job with incredible swiftness, for the board ends showed angles both obtuse and acute, and nails had often missed the mark. The carpenter may have been a man filled with hunger for the joy and beauty of earth, for he had left cracks between the boards through which one could look on quiet pastures and the sea. But these spaces admitted a wind so sharp that the candle flame swayed and the candle guttered wastefully. The floor was earth. The windows were fitted with strips from flour sacks instead of glass. Of furniture there was none, and we sat on sacks of flour, of beans, of sugar, of onions, and of those very hard biscuits called *galletas*. From the middle of a flour sack, MacRae, after a little digging, brought forth a bottle of

Kinahan's whiskey, and we fell to while he outlined the future with hopeful apprehension. Seeing that my silence led to erroneous and fanciful conclusions, I told him of my intention of seeing Tierra del Fuego.

He sat awhile, looking at me, not full but slantwise, so that with his narrow chin, and his eyes like slits, and his long nose, there was a vulpine expression about him. He assured me that he had no ulterior motives. He insisted upon his care of my safety. There were Indians, he told me, who would put an arrow through me. They killed white men on sight as white men killed them on sight. It was a land of starvation. The wind came with suddenness from the south and brought death with it. Besides, there was nothing to see. Life was stagnant and lusterless away from settlements, he gave me to understand. Then he held forth prospects. I would want money and there was money in sheep, so he could well afford to pay me. He would be willing to enter into a year's contract with me and as I wanted a measure of freedom he would stretch a point; that is, he would grant me a couple of free days each month in which I could go over to the Greek's shanty and get drunk, and never a word of complaint would I hear when I sobered up. If the money he offered seemed insufficient, I could earn something incidentally because there was money in Indians, for Steuben over in Punta Arenas offered five dollars for an Indian's ear, so I would be lining my purse and doing good at one and the same time, doing good in the way of clearing the country of a dark-skinned race unable to utilize the land to the best advantage. As for companionship, I might be able to catch an Indian girl, in which case I could have an upstairs room when the house should be enlarged, and he would give me his word of honor to play square in my absence. And, when he came to think of it, now and then a man picked up an Indian girl and sold her to schooner men. A fellow named Argyle made a decent penny on Indians. Also a little money could be picked up scouting for Ropper over in San Sebastian Bay. This Ropper had concessions from the Argentine government, also a monopoly in the gold-digging industry, and paid well for information that would lead to the detection of placer miners. Another thing lay in musical advantages, for I had spoken of a love of music. He would teach me to play the bagpipes, and I might use his chanter if I did not ask for it too frequently. The day's work being done, I could hear him whistle or play strathspeys and reels and marches and hornpipes, and those I would pick up, given I had a quick and attentive ear.

At this point MacRae looked narrowly at the whiskey bottle, then observed that we had consumed that which stood between the word Kinahan and the word Distillery on the label, held the bottle level to make sure, marked the space with his thumb nail, sighed, made to pour out another drink but changed his mind, uncorked the bottle and drank, then recorked it, after which he replaced it in the flour sack and interred it.

"An' you'll no' stay?" he asked. "I'm just telling ye, ye'll be sorry. . . . It is weel wairt they hae sorrow that buy it wi' their ain siller."

On my insisting that I had my mind made up he fell to painting a dark and gloomy picture of his loneliness. Then he said that whether I stayed or not, there remained a something that I could do for him for he had a trouble in his throat similar to that which troubled Gillies. For its cure he had swallowed gallons of an infusion of leaves recommended by an old Indian woman in Bahia Blanca, without effect, but a sailor had told him of a doctor in Edinburgh who was very clever in curing such diseases. Unfortunately his charges were high. However, doctors, he had learned, found it far from easy to get human skeletons, the which they sorely needed for study, as well as to hang up in their offices, "to make them look professional-like." So if I would write to the doctor, describing his symptoms, I could add in the letter that he could guarantee to send the physician a clean and fresh human skeleton in return for a supply of medicine. And the favor of writing I did him, though how the matter fell out I never learned. I left the shanty a week later, nor saw the man afterwards. But I have been told that he was killed by Indians, and at the news I could detect no grief in me. I am sure that as he watched me walking away he imagined that a mood of contrition filled me. At any rate he called, and when I halted said: "Dinna be too proud to tell me you've changed your mind," then laughed abruptly.

But instead I felt very happy indeed. Seeing me as I held myself to appear, you must picture a square and youthful figure, looking more square and stocky than my five foot nine and my hundred and sixty pounds seemed to warrant, because of the seaman's sou'wester I wore, and my leather coat, and my hip boots, and the huanaco *capa* strapped to my shoulders. Below the *capa* hung a flour sack, knobbly and bumpy because of two dozen hard ship's biscuits, and a rolled shirt, and soap, and a comb, and a tin whistle, and a tin box of matches. Add a pipe in full blast, a revolver, a hunting knife, the *Sartor Resartus* thrust in a pocket. And of my happiness I was sure because I stood sound of digestion and of teeth and of body, so I went with chin held high, glad to find myself marching toward the mountains that rose blue and still on the southern horizon. I was bound for San Sebastian Bay, because I yearned to see a monopoly in full blast, functioning in a free land.

7

The memory of the broad climbing valley is strong in me to this day, its soft grassiness and the ice-cold stream that ran through it, the sun sparkle everywhere. It pleased me often to turn and look back the way I came, to see the bay shining like a mirror, and, beyond, the straits; further north the snow-capped Andes. I was filled with a tremendous desire to see everything: to walk over Tierra del Fuego, to climb the Andes, to sail among the myriad islands of the west coast, to go where Magellan and Sarmiento and Drake and the pirate Esquemeling had been. The earth seemed to have yielded up a new sweetness to me and I lacked only a companion, a man who should be a thinking-aloud friend, with whom I might make a frank and pleasant business of wandering life.

Now that evening a strange thing came to pass. When the lower edge of the sun touched the distant hill, I was sitting by the side of a still lagoon on the bosom of which floated many ducks so tame and unafraid of men that they came almost within hand's reach, picking up the crumbs of sea biscuit that I flung them. Other birds fluttered near, some I took to be finches—one of which repeatedly darted to within an inch of my face, as a fly sometimes does—and some I thought were starlings, although I knew very little about bird life and could not identify them. But they engaged and amused me. Then I became aware, in the inexplicable way one does, of a human being, and, looking to the west, saw a tall youth like a bronze statue, his bow in hand. You must know that the faces of the Ooans are not attractive from our point of view, but rather the reverse, being somewhat big and flat, and with slant eyes. However, I saw the body not the face, and it was the body of an athlete, deep-chested and sinewy and strong-looking. It was beautiful too, with the sunset touching it, shining dull bronze. I knew that he could pierce me with an arrow, yet no fear possessed me. Rather I felt annoyed that we could not communicate intelligently, and my annoyance grew greater when he lifted his right hand high, then dropped it to his side. So I did the same, after getting to my feet, taking care as I did so that there should be no appearance of hostility. We were no more than twenty feet apart, and every action stood clear-cut. So from among the things of my flour sack scattered on the ground I picked up one of the ship's biscuits and held it out to him, then took a pace forward. He did the same. So we approached until we were within a hand's reach of one another and then I broke the biscuit and offered him one part, while I began to bite the other. Now it may seem silly to write that we talked, each in his own tongue, and not understood by the other, but so we did. I, for my part, told him that I meant friendship with his people, and what he said I suppose was much the same. You have, perhaps, been in such a circumstance where you approached and tried to make friends with a wild animal, or bird, or perhaps a strange and would-be friendly dog. Well, it was exactly like that. And it ended just as such meetings do. We tried to establish an understanding. We were eager to make our good will known. Then at the end we parted, somewhat shyly. He went around the lagoon and I camped down to sleep. In the morning, when I took up my packs, there was no sign of human being. But I missed my revolver and found, in its place, a bow and ten neatly made arrows.

8

The next evening, having gained the crest of a rise where I stopped to look over an infinity of country, I saw in a fold of the hills a shanty and a plume of lightest-blue smoke, so, wondering much, because I had thought that no white man could be within a hundred miles of me, I went toward the habitation. The way led me into the valley, and, at the bottom of it, across a long, bare bank of gravel which slid as I climbed. Being on the top and looking down, I saw three workmen with shovels, throwing gravel into a trough some thirty feet long, through which a swift stream of water flowed. Or, more correctly, one shoveled the gravel, another with a many-pronged fork prevented the gravel from sweeping down the trough, and a third stood knee-deep in water, throwing aside the gravel that came out at the end of the trough. Thus at a glance the mechanics of placer mining were revealed to me. Also, as it turned out, I had come at a critical time, that of washing-up, for when I hailed them, in Spanish first and then in French, one replied in Scandinavian English, saying, "Lend a hand. We'll talk when we got time." So I became helpful in an unimportant way. First we opened the dam at the head of the trough so that only a slight amount of water ran through; then, riffling with our hands, we worked the gravel down to the third section of the trough which had in it a false bottom, made of a hole-pierced plank, the holes forming pockets into which the gold and iron dust fell. Next, having taken up the false bottom, we scraped the gravel down to the end of the trough and into an iron pan held by one of the men. So we were finished with the troughs. One of the men took the pan and swirled it about in the creek, working off the gravel until nothing seemed to be left in the pan but a black sand, and while he did so the rest of us looked on. Then we went up the bank to the shanty where one held the iron pan over the fire until the water had evaporated, after which he blew carefully so that the iron dust slid over the edge and nothing remained but virgin gold. But the day's gain amounted to more than that, for, while working the gravel in the trough, they had picked up small nuggets, some of them the size of a pea, though not many, and one noble fellow of irregular shape roughly like a large acorn. So there was the output of the day, and when I asked John Johnson of the black beard and honest eye what he estimated as the cash value, he shrugged his shoulders in the manner of one only slightly interested, and said, "Maybe twenty dollars," then dismissed the subject and handed the pan to one of his partners. He, doing the job as neatly and accurately as a chemist, in spite of his rough hands, poured the dust in a narrow-necked bottle which already contained a considerable amount of gold, then hung the bottle by a string to a nail in the wall, from which depended another bottle full of gold dust. As for the nuggets, they went into a tin box among others. Thus the gold over which the world went mad.

Business being done, the four of us sat about the fire that burned on the earth floor in the middle of the room, while the supper cooked, none of them except me finding any discomfort because of the smoke, which had to find its way out as best it could. One brought out his accordion and played, then passed the instrument around, and it turned out that each one of us could make music of a sort. So came supper, which was a stew in which huanaco meat predominated, though there were traces of rabbit, and a pleasant flavor of the herb called orégano, and a suspicion of wild onion, and a decided evidence of sage. But the meat was the main thing. The meal being ended we cleaned our tin plates by laying them on the hot ashes. We lit our pipes. One of the company brought out a *bombilla* and a maté gourd, and prepared a maté, which we sipped and passed around. Presently, with fine simplicity, one of the Chileans made bread by pouring water into the flour sack and kneading the dough there, using leaven which had its origin no one could say where. "I got it years ago from the captain of the *Chilota*," said John Johnson, "and God knows where he got it from. But it was someone in the Falklands and maybe some old woman brought it out from Scotland."

"Years ago?" said I, as Johnson put the cake of dough into the hot ashes and covered it with embers.

"Why, I've dug hereabouts for more than twenty years," he answered.

"And I supposed Tierra del Fuego an unexplored land," said I.

"Why, as to that it is, where bookmen are concerned," he replied. "But there's no land anywhere but what hasn't been crossed and crisscrossed by some white man or other. Every explorer knows that. When an explorer goes exploring he always hires a guide. And there's never a guide but doesn't know of traces of other fellows before him. I knew two fellows who walked across Patagonia and came out west of Port Famine, Englishmen at that. They was young chaps at the time, and they came to a ship called the *Beagle*. This Darwin was on it. They say it's in a book Darwin brought out. What did Darwin do but leave 'em of course. Maybe they didn't want to be rescued anyway. And there was Allen Gardiner settling on the islands near Cape Horn in 1850, or thereabouts. I sailed with a mate once who made a study of old explorers and he had some rare tales about men found here and there. Why when this old Magellan first sailed he came through these straits and named 'em; one of his men remembered he'd been in Brazil and had had a child by some native woman. He found the fellow too, a grown man. That would make his son about twenty, let's say. That would leave the Portuguese being in Brazil somewhere about the time Columbus discovered America. Wouldn't it?"

After that for politeness sake we dropped into Spanish, and it came out that the two Chileans were escaped convicts. They said little in praise of their present mode of life, but it was abundantly clear that in their opinion it had the enormous advantage of being a free one. Freedom compensated for the loss of everything that civilization had to offer. For a little while I looked upon John Johnson as some fierce enemy of society, an unflinching rebel against the constituted authority of anarchistic philosophy, but there I was altogether wrong. He was nothing but a plain, industrious, solid man with an intense dislike of being bossed. He loved quiet and obscurity. When it came to a consideration of worldly success, he said that as a sailor he had not been one cent financially better off at the end of a year than he was now. True, he had little or nothing. "But there is all this," he said with a magnificent sweep of his arm, indicating Tierra del Fuego.

"And," said one of the Chileans, "no man can come and tell us to go to the wars or the revolutions. *Viva Tierra del Fuego!*"

"Among men," said the other Chileano, "a man trips and is never forgiven. His affair is not finished when he comes out of prison. It goes on and on. Here one begins again."

But all that appearance of lazy contentment vanished when they spoke of Ropper and San Sebastian Bay. For Ropper, it seemed, was a sort of Admirable Crichton, a musician and a hunter, a monopolist who stole from honest men and a free-handed entertainer, a duellist and a suave gentleman. And Andrew Lang had been his lieutenant and imitated him. There was also Sam Argyle who deserved death because he made a living killing Indians for the bounty, and, it had been said, would not stay his hand at a white man if he found one unprepared. "It would be a tall day," said John Johnson, when Little Billie and Blue-nose Bodmer came upon either Ropper or Argyle, all of them were somewhere between Santa Maria and San Sebastian. Also it would be an ugly day when Argyle came upon Ravenna who was also somewhere in the land, because once Ravenna had shot at Argyle. If ever I saw Ravenna I would know him because he rode an *aselako*.

"And what is an '*aselako*'*?*" I asked.

"Sort of a blue-gray horse," answered Johnson. "And Argyle always rides a big *blanco*. That's a white. When they meet look out for a squall."

CHAPTER III

High-Spirited Outlaws

I

We parted as casually as we had met. It had been a "Hallo!" at the beginning, and it was a "So long!" at the end, not as I take it because of any lack of human interest, but because of that strange shyness which makes man disinclined to show any softness. But I found myself wondering as I plodded over the hills, for I had found exactly what I had sought, men who dared to live their own lives free and unencumbered, who dared to be themselves, who dared to accept a life of extreme simplicity, yet with it all I knew myself contemptuous of them as unadventurous.

Now I had brought with me from Santa Maria a spade with a short handle, and a wash-pan, so here and there, at likely looking places, I tried my luck at gold hunting, but with so small success that I felt myself tempted to throw away the tools. Once from a hilltop I saw a pleasant stream, so to it made my way thinking to make a test.

In the hillside I found a natural cave, dry and warm, for it faced the north. So I camped there, and presently who should come but the same Indian I had met ten days earlier by the lagoon. He did not advance boldly, but in the timid, doubtful manner of one who would be friends, but was not sure of his reception, standing off with his bow held in such fashion that I could not by any possibility be suspicious of enmity. Hanging by a thong round his waist was my revolver. I could not understand a word that he said, and he said much, but there were signs by which he made clear that we were bound together by a common interest, for he went away up the stream for forty yards or thereabouts, then brought back a wild goose, evidently one shot some hours before. So I had a hint that he had known of my movements since we parted. And if ever a man gave evidence of courteous interest the Indian did when I built up my fire, then dressed and spitted the goose on a stick which I set in the angle of a couple of X supports. Also, in manner of one given to usefulness and activity while the goose cooked, the Indian took a light flint flake and with his canine teeth formed an arrowhead that was very symmetrical and not larger than the nail of my little finger. It was a toy or an ornament. Since then I have stood firm in the opinion that miniature arrowheads, such as one occasionally finds, were made for ornament's sake and not for weapons or bird arrows, as theorists have held. Indeed I have often seen Indians shoot birds, but they always used plain shafts sharpened at the tip and hardened in the fire.

I would not have it understood that the Indian stood to me in the light of any Crusoe's Man Friday, a servant or helper. In that environment he was the superior one. He knew where game was to be found. He was skillful in catching fish. His were the sharp eyes and quick ears. He taught me somewhat how to use the bow and arrow. The arts that I knew, civilized arts, were as useless in those surroundings as the arts of the Indian would have been in a city. Because of that I have always suspected that a fatal weakness lay in those adventure stories in which the white man brought natives to humble admiration by a display of skill altogether foreign to the environment. Another thing I noticed. Whatever of mine the Indian picked up, he tested by smell as a dog does. Also I am firmly convinced that his attachment to me had only a gastronomic origin. I had things to eat which were pleasant, and I could cook in a way new to him. His way with a fire was primitive. Meat he laid on the hot ashes, turned over once or twice then ate, almost raw. Shellfish he would lay by the fire until they opened. And the Indian fire, as I have said, was no larger than a man's hand. Indeed he found my small fire so unendurable that he had to sit away from it. In feats of strength we were equal, as in wrestling, lifting weights, or the like. In swimming and running he outdid me with ease. For keenness of eyesight he seemed to me to be wonderful, but when it came to looking at something close, as at the pictures of my *Sartor Resartus*, or even when he was trying to undo a knot, his eyes watered under the strain. And the plainest and simplest picture meant nothing for him, until I had explained as best I could, by sketching the crude figure of a man in the dust. But that which most surprised me was his ability to repeat, in parrot fashion, anything I said or read. I exploded with laughter when after having read aloud from *Sartor* I heard the naked native say in his booming bass, "With stupidity and sound digestion man may front much. But what, in these dull unimaginative days, are the terrors of conscience to the disease of the liver!" Noting how his saying of that amused me, he kept on repeating it, as a child might do, though the words became blurred in repetition, until I grew tired and bade him cease. Two days later, when my mind was on other things, I was startled to hear him say it again.

That was when I took out much gold from a confluence of a mountain stream with the rivulet that ran before my cave. Thomas Carlyle, for thus I named my Indian, could not or would not dig. But when I had got down to bed rock he would scratch out gravel and fill the pan willingly enough. And he found gold for me. At first the panning showed only a color or two, but then the gravel had not been taken from the bed rock. The pan that came next brought what would have been a half teaspoonful or even more. Then Thomas Carlyle found four nuggets of varying size, at which I made some exclamation, whereupon he laughed and began to chant his saying from *Sartor*. So to give him a new thing while he worked I recited Scott's

The chief in silence strode before,
And reached that torrent's sounding shore,

and before the end of the day Thomas Carlyle could recite it down to

Down came the blow. But in the heath
The erring blade found bloodless sheath,

which was where my own memory failed.

At hazard I would say that in two days I took out gold to the value of three hundred dollars; and at the moment of quitting Thomas Carlyle dislodged a boulder under which was a hollow, as if scooped out, where lay enough clean gold dust to fill an egg cup, besides two nuggets each of which seemed to me about the weight of a twenty-dollar gold piece. But I had no vessel in which to store my wealth, so I carried it to the cave in the wash-pan; and if you have tried to imagine the scene from my description, you must complete the picture with me in the cave cooking a rabbit, and Thomas Carlyle arranging and rearranging the gold in crisscross lines in the pan. And you must see me at first thoughtful, dreaming splendid dreams of millions, the owner of a yacht in which I would set sail and steer for Iceland, and Nova-Zembla, and some of those mysterious islands south of the equator in Polynesia. I would have a piano on board and I would liberally entertain companions as well as native chiefs. I had a fleeting dream of women, too, but pushed that aside because women were strangely unadventurous. Presently I woke up to the fact that I was talking to Thomas Carlyle who, having grown tired of playing with the gold, was beguiling himself by crunching the rabbit bones. When I came to the end he repeated my closing words, "and I'd like to have a good library too. First editions and all that," which sounded so oddly coming from his lips that I laughed aloud.

In the morning my pulse quickened at the thought of the gold, so I greeted Thomas Carlyle joyously, expecting an answering rapture. In what he replied I caught a note of objection, but there were no gestures by which I could guess at his meaning. He picked up his bow, slung his *capa* and his sheath of arrows over his head, and left. I watched him as he vanished over the shoulder of the hill but he did not so much as glance back. So I went down to my hole in the valley, baled out the water, shoveled away much clay to lay bare the gold-bearing gravel; but the flush had died down in me and the work seemed dull to the point of stupidity. When the paying streak ran out, which it did soon after the finding of the rich pocket, I felt relieved at having an excuse to quit a distasteful job. Fleeting thoughts of investments had passed through my head but I had rejected them. What I wanted to do was to spend furiously, to be tremendously hospitable, to play the millionaire for a day or so, but a ship held most attraction, and a ship it might be if any luck stayed with me in the valleys that led to San Sebastian. I guessed that I had the value of some seven thousand dollars.

2

Not till then did it occur to me that the carrying of my gains offered a serious problem, for I had nothing that would serve as a container. For a while I carried it in a pan, but my arms ached and became numb. So I took off my leather coat, turned the sleeves inside out and tied up the wrists of them, then divided the gold into equal portions and put it into the improvised bags. With the coat slung across my shoulders I managed fairly well, though the banging and bumping of the weight soon annoyed me so much that I seemed often on the point of hiding the gold; sometimes I found it difficult to persuade myself that I should continue to carry it. Half-forgotten sayings about the rich fool who congratulated himself upon the wealth he possessed tormented me. When that faded I was bothered with the question that presented itself as to whether it was better to have something unwanted, or to want something not to be had. The question ran like an annoying refrain, fitting itself to my steps. At noon a furious wind blew up, and when it lulled there came a driving, sleety rain so I was soon wet to the skin. The plain afforded no shelter so it was a matter of trudging on to the distant hills through ankle-deep mud for long stretches, the clay pulling at my boots so as partly to drag them off. My sou'wester shed water down my back and into my trousers. My possessions hung about me most miserably. So I flung away my shovel and my pan, and when my sou'wester blew off I could not bring myself to stoop to recover it, so I went on bareheaded, counting the loss a gain. When the dusk came I found myself at the edge of a stream that rushed along yellow and turbulent, roaring wildly, a stretch of water about five yards wide. On the other side a horse stood, all humped and shivering and dejected looking, his ears hanging miserably. But it was blue-gray, "*celaje*" I told myself, trying to account for the word that sounded like aselako, therefore Ravenna would be near at hand.

After a little shouting that brought no response, I went into the river, keeping my footing with difficulty because of the rush of the water and my unhandy impedimenta, though the stream turned out to be no more than waist deep.

Having emptied the water out of my boots I went to the horse which gave the weariest of whinnies, having a mind to change its feeding ground because it had been there longer than a good man would have left his animal, judging by the trampled grass, but I refrained because of the etiquette which forbade meddling with a man's horse or dog. Following a faint footpath that led up a hollow I came in sight of a top of a tent showing over a hummock and after that went hallooing and whistling, but no man showed himself. I thought that no living man was there until I rounded the shoulder of the hill; then I saw Ravenna standing at the entrance of his tent, which was little and low, but I wondered much because he gave no sign of welcome. We stood face to face, three feet or so separating us. I saluted him in Spanish, but he gave no sign of understanding and looked beyond me with faded blue eyes. Then he grew voluble, not in any welcoming way, but running on from one thing to another; about his lack of gold; about how weary and miserable he was; about how that valley was his birthplace and property, which I knew to be nonsense, so I felt sure I had a deranged man to deal with. But seeing no weapon I felt more secure, especially as I judged that I stood a chance in a tussle by reason of my greater weight and my youth. Presently something sickened me. As he faced about it seemed as if the side of his face had been painted black, and as if the paint had run down his neck and arm, but it did not dawn on me at first sight that his left ear had been slashed or torn off recently.

Now more of the man's history I cannot tell. I had stumbled into the middle of a mystery and could only guess that he had been attacked and mutilated, and that his weapon and his gold had been taken. Hour after hour in his delirium he babbled on about a silver-handled knife, then about Santiago, then about a man named Adolph who could sing, then about the lameness of his horse. He did things in a mechanical way, as tying his horse in a sheltered and clean place after I led him to the animal; as helping me replenish the fire; as handing me strips of that dried horse flesh called charqui when I set about making a stew; as getting a bucket of water from the creek. When I put my gold in a tin biscuit box he regarded the process without particular interest, in the manner of gold miners. But do what I could, he would not be persuaded to let me dress his wound. After we had eaten and while I dried my clothes, sitting naked the while, he brought out a cracked guitar and sang a Triste in melancholy way, then passed into a weird crooning of some songs without words, and his music lasted until his head began to nod with weariness. Then the gentle madman took his rosary and began, but gradually drooped until he dropped his beads; so he stretched himself at full length before the fire. I covered him with his *capa*, then dressed myself and went out to look for sticks, which took me some distance away, but the moon shone fairly bright, so I worked with some energy because fuel was not easy to find and by all signs a storm seemed to be brewing. Perhaps I had been gone for an hour and a half, for I gathered a good pile, and when I returned to the tent laden with black crooked roots, I found the place vacant and the man gone. He had taken his horse and simple gear, nor could I see or hear anything to give me a clue as to direction.

There being nothing that I could do, I brightened the fire and lay down to sleep and slept the sounder for the snow that fell throughout the night. Nor did the snowfall cease, except for an hour or so on the day after; but in the sky were signs of more snow to come, so I worked very hard, going about in snow more than a foot deep, gathering wood. By night I had gathered a great brush pile on the south side of the tent, and also had stacked in tepee fashion many branches and slabs in front of the tent. On one of my wood-carrying trips I found the place where the lone man had worked. His boxes had been broken, his tools thrown into the creek, what signs of struggle there might have been were snow-covered. I found his ax, though I had to get into the water to retrieve it, a cheap price to pay for a tool worth its weight in gold to me. It snowed all night, all the next day and all through the night after. Eight days in all I stayed in the tent, snow-bound, staring at the walls, the fire, the ash-covered floor, the two cow skulls that served for seats. On the night of the second day I had nothing eatable left except a little flour, some rice, and part of a bladder of lard. It was on the fourth day that I thought to trap some of the olive-gray field mice that scurried about the floor so I made a trap of the skillet, using a stick and a piece of string, using rice for bait, catching several of the creatures which I skinned and fried. But I suffered more from cramped confinement than from hunger. I felt miserably dirty too, in spite of my washing in snow.

Once, while getting ready to fry a flapjack, some snow fell through the rotten canvas into the boiling grease. The grease shot up like an exploding geyser, and my eyelids and face were badly burned, so that I could not see. In great pain I ran out and plunged my face into the snow, but that seemed to make the pain worse. Exploring carefully with my finger tips, I felt my face to be much swollen but knew my hurts were superficial; also I remembered and dwelt on the fact that the seeing apparatus of a man was well protected. For all that I could not allay my fear that inflammation might cause trouble. After bandaging myself clumsily, using lard to keep the skin from cracking, I sat down to school myself to wait. I tried philosophical endurance, and oriental resignation, but always fell into furious impatience and tried to pass an hour or two by locating things: the skulls, the hole in the tent, the sacks, my tin box of gold. I fell to working out arithmetical problems about the relative and exact position of the hands of a watch at a given hour; tried to make a mental map of Tierra del Fuego and especially of the route over which I had passed. Then I went to the tent entrance and yodeled and hallooed, and whistled shrilly between my fingers hoping that by a chance in a million the young Indian might be near and hear me; but I desisted suddenly, remembering the earless man and those who had mutilated him, probably for the bounty's sake.

So I went back to the intolerable boredom of sitting in the tent in my blindness, to trying to be apathetic, to breathing the smoke-laden air, to worrying about the approaching night when I would be unable to sleep because of lack of exercise; went back to the general corruption of the tent and its foulness of old bones and hides. But whether it was three in the afternoon or six at night, or what time it was, I had no idea; three o'clock seemed the nearest, so there remained, as I thought, about six hours to waste until I tried to sleep. It would be well enough if I could make myself tired, so I tried exercising, raising the skulls high above my head a hundred times, using them dumb-bell fashion, but the monotony of it angered me. I hungered for the fresh air above all things. At least I could try my experiment of finding my way through the snow, say for a distance of two hundred steps, then turn about and return by my own track to the tent. So out I went, going with caution and marking the direction of the wind, exercising all foresight and prudence and caution. I must, I told myself, be cheerful and active. And how happy those activities made me! How I expelled every particle of air from my lungs and drank deep drafts of clean air until I felt dizzy! How I picked up handfuls of snow and rubbed my face and neck where I dared, delighted with the cleanness of it!

On I went, thinking I would be able to find the stream I had crossed and enjoy the noise of it, so I took more than the hundred and fifty paces I had planned to take, had gone past two hundred indeed and had forgotten to count. Then I stood, listening for the noise of waters, but except for the sound of the wind, which came in gusts, the world seemed silent, and then I remembered how the snowfall would make a difference, and imagined the river running black under the white covering, with perhaps a hole showing here and there, because the snow must have drifted heavily into that valley. So I turned about and had taken several steps before I realized that I was still plunging through virgin snow when I should have been in my own tracks. It came to me that I had stepped off at an angle and that my course would be roughly parallel to my tracks, so I bore lightly to the left, but found my sense of direction all vanished when I took a stride that carried me into nothingness, for I fell into a deep drift. I guessed that I had stepped over the edge of a flat rock. Recovering my footing I took a few steps, certain that I had turned sharply enough to head me to my track, but instead I went waist deep into icy cold water that filled my long boots. So I knew that I was somewhere by the side of the rivulet that joined the mountain stream, and therefore that my tent would have to be ahead and somewhat to the left and doubtless in plain sight if I could see. I stopped to listen for the crackle of burning wood. Instead I heard with a shock the hoot of a Magellanic owl, so knew it to be night instead of early evening as I had supposed. I had to do some careful thinking as I took off, emptied and replaced my boots, shivering the while as I had never shivered before. The lowered temperature told that the night had advanced, and at midnight a bitter, freezing wind generally swept up from the southeast. I did not want to be out in that kind of weather. My only cheering thought came in remembering that had I been able to see, my case could have been no better than it was, because of the pitchy darkness. My ears would have to be my guide, aided by the sense of smell. Thereupon I got possession of myself again and my panic fright left me. Listening intently, trying to analyze sounds, the common chorus of which I did not notice because of familiarity—the wind noise, the distant owl, the sounds I myself made, the gurgle of the rivulet which had escaped me until that moment —I heard faintly the creak of straining canvas. By magic complications cleared away. I had a direction. Nevertheless, I stopped every few yards to listen, sometimes standing for a long time. It bewildered me to discover that my way led across the rivulet twice, until I supposed that I must have wandered about a bend; and when I reached the tent, after many minor mishaps, I came upon it from a direction exactly opposite to my point of leaving.

In spite of my hunger I fell into a deep sleep after I had built my fire and stripped myself and hung up my water-soaked clothes. When I awoke the sun was shining and I discovered that I could see again, but only out of my right eye and mistily, much as when a man looks through eyelids narrowed to the merest slit. As for rations for the day there remained nothing but a cupful of lard and an ounce of rice, so I faced what might befall with a poor start.

3

And much did befall. First, a mile or so from the tent, I found the horse dead. Had it not been for the hovering and slowly circling caranchas I would have missed it. Another flock further off prepared me for what I found, but the carrion birds had clawed and torn the body, leaving it a terrible sight. So I put down my burdens and piled stones on what was left of the tortured earless man, and went on trying to forget. There is this which I cannot explain, and record it because of its opposition to whatever literature relative to the moods of men: although I felt hungry and tired and cold, yet as I went I whistled the beginning of the scherzo from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, amusing myself the while by making throat noises to fill in the orchestral parts.

My memory is very sure on the subject of that heavy walk on an empty stomach. I did not fall with exhaustion, or soliloquize in despair in the way of characters in stories of adventure, nor even think of doing so. Nor did I waver in my purpose of going to San Sebastian. In spite of ten days or more on short rations I had a good margin of energy, which reserve force, I believe, came from my meat-eating, for meat formed nine tenths of my diet then as it does now. On the evening of the day after I buried the earless man I shot a goose with an arrow —no great trick because I got within twenty feet of the bird. While my fire grew I drew out the bird's entrails and prepared it for cooking by plastering it round with clay. No sooner had I settled myself to watch it cooking, and to enjoy the sight of sticks melting into flame, than I had a disconcerting sense of someone approaching. Perhaps my unconscious self had heard. Anyhow the meeting that ensued had the appearance of what people call a presentiment, for I turned to look over my shoulder, and while I looked at the empty slope, over the crest of it came a man who said, "JE-sus Christ! What the hell you doin' with a fire like that? For God's sake put it out." Then he testified to his peculiar ancestry and declared that if I did not put out the fire we would have "every bloody hard-case in the country down here."

Thus I came to know Blue-nose Bodmer, whose frequent references to his canine ancestry grew out of a frank, eager, vivid spirit of friendliness; indeed they were complimentary, for he held dogs in highest esteem. He could laugh with the fullness growing out of eager happiness. His spirit was social. He was swayed by feeling. He was generosity, hospitality, fierce independence, chivalry, energy, all rolled into one. A more blasphemous, outspoken, uncomplicated and unimaginative fellow never walked the earth. The outer man stood about five feet eight, sandy-haired and freckle-faced, with the frame of a middle-weight pugilist, with a smile that was a peculiar delight to see, with the gait of a horseman and the roll of a seaman, with a face tanned to mahogany. And his partner, Little Billy, you must see as five foot of tough endurance, the sort to regard life as a wild drama, a bundle of irresistible energy, a lad always brisk and efficient, but of a more serious mien than his partner. But Little Billy I did not see until some time later.

Bodmer helped me in stamping out the fire, said with a happy laugh that I did not know what a queer-looking sight I was, then led the way to his camp across the vega, swinging my goose as he went, for he held it too good to waste. A climb of ten feet up the barranco brought us to a hollow among rocks where a spring of clear water bubbled out of the cliff to fall into a rock basin. A ruddy fire with almost no smoke burned under a rock shelf, and a pot of water stood in the heat. A man might have ridden past the place never suspecting a camp. Once or twice as we sat eating or smoking, Bodmer began to tell me of some adventure that had befallen him and his pal, but shook his head and gave up as if despairing of the problem of lucid expression. The man was almost inarticulate, though crammed full of experiences.

When Little Billy came, he took the central place. Into a bush he flung his light gaucho gear, said that he had heard about me at the Greek's in Porvenir, looked at my gold and guessed its value, complained of his hunger, and then commenced to eat. The two friends talked together and there was no discourtesy in their trick of referring to their adventure without including me in the conversation, or without acquainting me with the outline of the subject that had interested them, as Miss White of the infant school would have insisted. The courtesy came in their lack of reticence. I had to consider myself free to listen and to draw what inferences I cared to draw. They thought aloud in my presence. So I gathered, putting this and that together, that they had been held up by the San Sebastian people. Bodmer took everything as a funny piece of business, and frequently referred to his genealogical tree. He laughed uproariously. "Four dummies stuffed with straw up on the barranco and us in the creek with never a gun. It's good enough for a book. Someone ought to put it in a book. Damned if they oughtn't to. Two of 'em holding us up and four dummies stuffed with straw." His mirth faded and he referred incidentally to his mother.

"It's no joke to dig thousands and thousands of bloody pounds' worth of gold and have it took from you by a lot of Argentine swines," said Little Billy, who saw only the tragic side, but a sense of cosmic humor kept Bodmer in roars of laughter.

Everything pointed to retaliatory measures and punitive expeditions when Little Billy talked, but to letting the incident pass as a good joke when Bodmer had his say.

Then came the beginning of a melodramatic piece of business. That is, it has the appearance of melodrama when I sit down in cold blood and record it, but in those days it seemed extraordinarily matter-of-fact. There we were, Bodmer quite unimaginative, Little Billy thirsting for revenge, and I, in a scoundrelly way, making tremendous plans for the fun of the thing. As I planned, romancing, the two sat wide-eyed and the plans grew and grew. First it was a proposition to raid San Sebastian in the night, taking what we could by stealth. Then came a plan to kidnap Ropper, or Andrew Lang, holding them for brigandish ransom on some island, the Argentine government to pay the tribute. We speculated upon the possibility of a band of outlaws in Robin Hood style, which move included an alliance with the Indians and eventually an independent government for Tierra del Fuego.

"I'm game," declared Little Billy, and suggested good men and true, Bill Potter, Jock of Skye, Mike of Romero, Spotted Joe. But since the job closest to hand was the raid on San Sebastian we went into details, I myself very careful in planning, while thinking it would come to nothing.

Yet it did.

The two Billys refused to notice the air of detachment that I assumed the next morning. The project loomed large in their minds, nor were they troubled with the problems of right and wrong.

"I reckon we had twice as much gold as you got there," said Bodmer. "We reckoned it at about pretty nigh fifty pounds' weight. Say about fifteen thousand dollars." He spoke of his mother in allegorical style.

"Say Lord knows what in English money," said Little Billy. "Stands to reason we'll never get anywhere near that. Saying nothing of our horses and things."

Matters went swiftly, and presently we stood on the ridge that overlooked San Sebastian Bay, seeing the loose grouping of horses and galpons, and the little figures that went to and fro from the cook house and bunk house to the beach. I could think of nothing except Kropotkin's story of the Siberian convicts, knowing that the men who worked in the bay were hard cases sent down from Buenos Aires. Out at anchor rode a cutter; beyond the point lay the Atlantic, all a glitter and blue, a sky of cloud-flecked amethyst meeting it.

"Them amalgamated plates I'm going to chuck into the sea," said Little Billy.

And when the time came he did exactly that. It was his great effort in our raid, because his vision meant only the temporary crippling of the gold-digging operations at San Sebastian. His self-respect increased enormously when he had done what he set out to do. And it was easy for many reasons. In the first place the night was dark. In the second the guards sat together at the fire leeward of a shanty so they could not see beyond the circle of light, and in the manner of guards and watchmen the world over would go to any length to avoid conflict. Little Billy went alone to the washing machines and, as we learned later, worked hard with a monkey wrench and other tools which were in the tool box. Bodmer and I attacked the storehouse. The job was amazingly easy in spite of the fact that the watchman on guard, a rapscallion from Ohio, had a reputation for ferocity because he had slain a man in Laboca. Bodmer knew him, hailed him in friendly speech and in friendly speech the man replied.

"Help yourselves," he said, having learned our mission. "But tie me up. Not now, but when you've finished."

"Don't be a fool makin' a row," said Bodmer. "Show us where the things are and lend a hand."

"I'll go with you," suddenly said the watchman. "I'm tired of this."

After that the guard was not merely positive, but exceedingly helpful. He showed us where clothes were kept and we chose coarse shirts and boots and a leather coat apiece, then added three huanaco *capas*. We took sardines and Havana cigars, condensed milk, jams, pickles, cheeses, Danish butter, cans of plum pudding prepared by a notable house for the tables of "gentlemen emigrants," bottles of Worcestershire sauce "made from the recipe of a gentleman of quality for the table of noblemen," cans of peas and beans from Paris. Of wines, spirits and liqueurs we got nothing. When Little Billy joined us he thought it no more than his just due to take from a cash box, which he broke open, a handful of those very beautiful gramme weight coins, a little larger than a dime, which the King of San Sebastian coined for the use of his subjects. He put what he found in one of the many pockets of his cash belt which I wore, to take care of my gold. In the subsequent excitement I lost all of the coins except one, for we had not remembered a hole in a corner of the pocket, and that one, alas! my father lost in Kansas City some three years ago.

That excitement came about in this way. When we looked at our loot, it seemed pitifully small compared with the amount that the Billys had lost, although we had in mind to even things up by taking four or five horses. But the loading of pack horses is no small job with only a shaded lantern for light, especially with a drizzling rain making matters worse. Happily an idea struck the Nova Scotian and he swore softly, good-naturedly, reflectively.

"There's the cutter," he said, having relieved himself of his store of expletives. "Let's take it." Thus simply were new plans laid. So down we went to the crazy mole and got out the chatty, the watchman helping but always under suspicion and close observation. Into the boat we loaded our plunder. Then the watchman thought of a pig that had been slaughtered that day, so, after we had put our stuff on board the cutter, with Little Billy to guard it and the watchman to prepare for sailing, Bodmer and I returned ashore. We loaded the pig and had pulled the chatty out to the end of the mole when Bodmer remembered that we had seen a book in the storehouse, a book of songs. Immediately his whole attention went to that.

"What was it called?" he asked, as we sat in the boat. "There used to be a picture in it. A woman sellin' pies in a soldiers' camp. Many's the time I looked at it."

"*The Exile of Erin's Songster*, or something of the kind," I answered, then advised speedy flight for the wind held fair.

"Jesus! The very one we used to have in Halifax," said Bodmer as he lit his pipe, and by the match glare I caught the glitter of happiness in his eyes. "I got to have it and that's all there is to it. Got to have it in spite of hell and high-water."

"What does it matter? Don't be a fool."

"Why! There's old songs in it I always wanted to know," he replied in dead earnestness. "There's one that goes

"I'm sitting on the stile, Mary,
Away up in the mines,
A-lookin' out for lumps of gold
And pockets all I finds.

I forget the rest. It's a famous old song. If you don't want to come, stay by the chatty. I'll hurry."

So we went back, found the song book, which was a little flat volume not more than four inches long, and started for the boat. Then Bodmer remembered some pocket handkerchiefs and must have them. And when at last we threw open a door to leave, we saw the figure of a man silhouetted against the night sky. Had he fired his revolver at random into the doorway one of us or both must have been hit. But instead he said "Ha!" and then, "What's your game?" or something of the sort, and it was enough for Bodmer to identify him.

"Lang, by Jesus!" he said. The rest was a mixed-up struggle with Bodmer and Andrew Lang clutching and clawing and grunting, I unable to take any part, the watchman in the rear trying to tie himself up creditably. And, contrary to all the laws of romance, not once did Lang call for help or raise any outcry to give alarm. I have since supposed that he wanted to make a dramatic capture. The two men struggled in the doorway, both cursing and threatening, and it ended when Bodmer was uppermost, sitting across Lang's belly and telling him that if he did not obey orders his throat would be cut. I tried to be helpful in persuasion by touching Lang's forehead with the muzzle of his revolver, though I had taken my finger from the trigger, somewhat fearing accidental pressure under excitement. When it came to threats or flourishes I felt that I had to be general. I enjoyed it all tremendously. Uppermost in my mind was the thought that it would make a good entry for my diary. Actually I do not know what passed in any specific way. Things were involved and complicated. But it seemed quite within the ordinary run of things that Lang presently should be walking quietly down to the beach and on to the mole, and that Bodmer should be saying to me: "Either got to take the swine with us or kill him, and we don't want to do that." Our prisoner went in the boat lamely enough, and we pushed off, and doubtless everything might have gone without alarm had not a lantern on the chatty flashed. With that someone on shore shouted. There came the crack of a revolver. Next we heard the voices of men, and we saw a light or two moving down to the mole. Lang sat in the boat as we pulled, and I wondered why he did not take to the water until he said, "If I could swim!" A short while after I noticed that his teeth were chattering, though whether with cold or with fear it was impossible to say. He made no noise, spoke no word. When we pulled the cutter alongside, he waited until Bodmer ordered him to get on board, and when we pulled up anchor and set sail he lent a hand. Nor did the enormity of our adventure come to me until we felt the water outside the point, when Lang said, "It's piracy, but it's your game."

But Lang worked bravely enough, and we sailed a southeasterly course with a good breeze, along the coast and until we were well past Cape San Vincente and halfway across the strait of that name. We headed west with Staten Island to port, and had a run over as pleasant a sea as man could wish for; then behind Cape Horn and into Beagle Channel, and west between the islands, then east again with Mount Sarmiento on the right, so rounding Dawson Island and at last dropping anchor in Useless Bay, close to shore. I crowd it all together, though, what with one thing and another, it took us two weeks and more to round Tierra del Fuego and come to a point about forty miles due west from the place where we had taken the cutter. It had been a five-hundred-mile cruise, rather more or less. And during that time Lang made it clear that he had forgotten ancient scores. Not only that, but he showed how, by complicated misunderstanding, miners had often visited the sins of the Boss of San Sebastian on his shoulders. He stood the victim of circumstances. He was tangled in a coil. At heart he detested all that business of concessions and monopolies and, in a way, was thankful that chance had taken him out of it for a little while.

Now you cannot be in close contact with men for long without coming to like or dislike them, and Lang lacked not at all in adventurousness, nor in high-spiritedness. One evening in particular, down in the Beagle Channel, in a place where gloomy mountains swept up into the sky from the water's edge, at a time when we were dog-tired after a day of squalls, somewhat dull-spirited too, Lang's voice was the voice of joy and health. He sang, he told stories, he averted dangerous subjects with a delicate tact; he became a companion both charming and delightful. From that moment we all stood on a new footing. Down went barriers, and we talked without reservation about gold-bearing streams, about our finds and discoveries, about how San Martine had discovered a place in Useless Bay, and much more. So, "He's fine when you come to know him," said Little Billy, and Bodmer, the man of narrow limitations where expression was concerned, said, "I'm a son of a bitch if he isn't an all right son of a bitch."

So at last we came to where, in Useless Bay, San Martine who had killed Adolph Ruiz was making his fortune, and with him worked Hans and a Finn named Big Robert, and Ohio Bob, Kirke of Montreal and also Cockney Ted the cook. They had drawn up on the beach and turned upside down their whale boat, for shelter. They had windbreaks made of cloth and of silk, fixed up on tripods which had been intended for washstands, for the beach was strewn with jetsam from wrecks. Close to where they worked lay a case of French walking canes, slim things of some yellow flexible wood, with imitation ivory handles in the shape of a female leg. After explanations we sat together on the beach and Ohio Bob told the tale of their good fortune. They had struck it rich and no one could guess the end of it, but there would have to be some temporary cessation because they were out of food. So Lang and Bodmer and the San Sebastian watchman and I rowed out to the cutter and rummaged out supplies and brought back much, leaving the watchman on board. And we feasted liberally, smoked fine cigars from the San Sebastian stock, and then expressed ourselves to the effect that nothing more was needed to complete our satisfaction except wine. Soon I became aware of a kind of interrogative spirit in the party. Manifestly there was an understanding.

"What do you say, fellows?" asked Bob.

"It's all right with me any time," said Cockney Ted.

"*Tam bien*," said San Martine.

Then Montreal Kirke explained. "Fact is," he said, "we found a case of cognac once, and it got the better of us. So we left it to Bob to stow and don't know where it's hid. Agreed to let it alone, you know. . . . But this makes everything different. Auld Lang Syne and all that."

"Eight bottles left," said Bob. "Let someone come along." So Bodmer and I went with Bob up the beach, across a flat, along a narrow creek and to one of several pools where Bob went on his knees and began disinterring bottles. Judging four would be sufficient for the evening, we loaded ourselves and went back to our party. Then came a merry night's entertainment, not any swinish drinking bout, but a time of joviality, everyone extremely vigorous in song and story; enjoying flashes of wit from Lang, and music-hall reminiscences from Cockney Ted, and tales of Texas from Bob of Ohio; and hearing Bodmer corroborate Kirke about Canada's wealth and opportunity. San Martine sang many a song, and Big Robert picked up some interrupted autobiographical tale by which it turned out that he and Little Billy had many acquaintances in common. So we forgot that behind us lay the wilderness of Tierra del Fuego and before us the almost unvisited archipelago, and remembered only the firelight and companionship and a present sense of well being.

Presently I stretched myself full length and lay looking up at the stars. It was perfect rest to lie there and listen to the droning voices, to feel the warmth of the fire, to wriggle elbow and hip until a hollow place to fit human corners formed itself in the sand, to reflect upon all those strange adventures weaving themselves into a tapestry. So I fell asleep, and, being the early bird at that end of the day, was the early bird next morning. My companions lay here and there, so I went to work to make a pot of coffee, and while doing that discovered with a start that the cutter no longer lay at anchor in the bay. The chatty too had disappeared. Then I checked up to find Lang absent, also the watchman, also Cockney Ted. And when I woke the others it was quite a long time before a sort of foolish pride allowed anyone to deplore the loss of all the gold, mine as well as the treasure of the company.

So there is the end of that adventure, and you may read something more of Andrew Lang in my story of that name, which is somewhat, but not extravagantly, colored for romance's sake. As for Cockney Ted, who passes out of the story, he shipped on a steamer, fell into the hold and broke his neck. The watchman too vanished, for he presently went into the Andes to hunt Inca treasure and was never heard of again.

4

The whole business that followed lacked plan. We did a good deal of talking, and, I remember, some silly proposition came up by which we were to gather together the Indians, but it grew out of a romantic piece of imagining on my part. In the end we went to work again and the duty that fell to me was the finding of food. That meant hunting and fishing and cooking too, but it turned out to be no hard task, game of all kinds being plentiful enough. As to the gold, we had struck a bad patch again. Looking back, I see a picture of evenings with no returns for the day's labor but everyone doggedly determined to keep on. No question of community welfare entered into the loose arrangement. Everyone was free to come and to go as seemed best to the individual. Thus, when the Canadian went out one morning and did not return, his farewell was no more than a statement that he would "have a look round to see if he could hit a likely spot"; a sort of grim assurance that every man was well able to take care of himself fell upon us and there was an end of the matter. Later I heard that he had walked along the beach, going on and on, until at evening he came opposite a sealing schooner. He went on board, enjoyed a good meal, fell asleep, and before he awoke the ship had set sail headed for the seal islands. The way I heard the news joined with the way I also left that place, and my departure came suddenly and unexpectedly.

Bodmer and I were out with the guns and had made a long round without success, for it was a bleak day and windy, with the sky a lead gray and the sun no more than a faintly luminous spot, and the ground hard with frost, so that we made much racket as we walked, nor heard anything because of the wind noise. You must see us in fluttering rags held together with thorns. My leather coat lacked one arm, and under it I wore a wreck of a sweater. My pants, fashioned by myself out of sail cloth, were sewn with a tarred string and the rough edges of the material stood forth nearly a quarter of an inch both outside and between my legs so that as I walked every step was accompanied with a "crick-crack" noise. On one foot I had the ruins of a knee-high boot, on the other a sabot I had found on the beach. I was hatless, but a thatch of thick hair sufficed for head covering. Bodmer, who suffered more from cold than I did, wore several layers of old clothes. There would have been complexities of dressing in the mornings had he undressed himself at night.

We decided that it was better to camp somewhere and hunt back by way of Santa Maria foothills the next day, so toward late afternoon we climbed the coast range to enable us to strike a good course. All day we had been in the valley and out of sight of the straits. Then, through a cleft in the hills, I saw one of those vignettes that have ever since shaped themselves in my memory. Afar, cupped between hills, lay the straits, gray and severe. As we looked the sun came out, turning the triangular piece of sea into a glittering gem all enlaced with silver threads, a sapphire wonder that swiftly changed. So small was the vision of beauty that had I raised my finger as one does in beckoning, the quivering jewel would have been hidden from me. At some magic touch of new light the color faded from amethyst to gold-green, and the far horizon clouds took on shapes of castles and parapets and palaces, all purple- and scarlet-edged. A sea bird, white and shining, swept out of the near hills and sailed into the picture, dipping low, then rising without wing motion, and, having made obeisance, vanished. Then there came a white-sailed ship, a little ship that swam by enchantment out of a bush delicate of outline that edged out of the green frame. There were shining waves at her bow, and the sun's fire touched her wake to molten dancing gold. As she turned to her anchorage she became a white banner in an amber glow; then the splendor melted into gray again.

I can see the ragged figure of Bodmer, ruddy-faced and bearded, as plainly as if it had all taken place an hour ago. When the sun slid behind a cloud he shook his head slowly. He took a breath as if to say something, but remained silent. A minute or so later he made another effort. "I don't want to say nothing when I see things like that," he said, "I just feel like a silly bastard; nothing at all like . . . What beats me is that it's only one of the things there is to see in the world . . . when you come to think of it. Makes a man feel like a bloody fool, diggin' and grindin' around." He made another effort, trying to put things compactly. "Makes me feel I've got to thank someone for putting up a show like that."

We remained motionless for a short space of time, then I said that I would go down to the schooner and try to ship in her to whatever port she was bound. So we argued somewhat, not so much in persuasion as in conjuring up difficulties. Bodmer, who showed no inclination at all to leave Tierra del Fuego, advanced the opinion that no decent schooner would let such a scarecrow on board. "'Tisn't like they had it in books where they pick up fellows off beaches whenever they see 'em," he said. "That's all right in them novels but it don't work that way. If schooners was to pick up every fellow 't signalled 'em they'd be all loaded down to the Plimsoll line." He gave cases that had come under his notice. "Here's another thing that shows," he said. "Suppose you did get took aboard, what then? Landing in a port like that. That dress. They'll call it indecent. You're too damn poor for the decent society of man. That's what. You'd find yourself in jail first thing you know. Better stay in Tierra del. . . . Anyway, if you're goin' don't ask no favors of the ol' man till he's had something to eat."

Hearing that last I suddenly perceived that I was very hungry indeed.

"I've got to get something to eat," I said. "Bread and cheese especially."

"Cheese!" echoed Bodmer. "Wonder why it is I'm always hungry for cheese? If I thought there was cheese on board I'd go too. Damned if I wouldn't. But what's the use? If there was cheese the capt'n 'd be keepin' it for hisself. I know ships. I know captains, too."

At that point our talk came to an end. We fidgeted a little. "You got a whole long way to go if you're goin' to do anything in the world," said Bodmer. Then he asked, curiously, "Say! Is it true that you got well-to-do people? They say you've got something like that, the way you talk." When I assured him of my nakedness it seemed we were at the end of our conversational tether. So we parted with a "So long!" and a "See you again some day!" and I went down the hill and toward the sea.

Now when I reached the shore it must have been about midnight, and the mast-head light of the little schooner gave no indication of how far out she lay. As I afterwards found, the distance was much less than I thought. For a little while I walked up and down the beach, but after shouting once or twice I gave up the idea of hailing her. What I most feared was that Bodmer's prediction that those on board would simply disregard me would be verified, especially if they saw me in daylight and detected my plight of poverty when they looked through binoculars. And I knew that at the first dawn she would get under way. It took very little time for me to decide upon a course, and, having decided, I slipped out of my clothes, then having tied on my head all except the footwear, which I discarded, I went into the water and found it cutting cold, the more because it ran shallow for a long way and I had to wade. When I came to swimming I had not gone far before I found myself in kelp, and swimming in that stuff is like being in a network because the long snaky stems tangle a man in most unexpected ways. They are sticky ropes that coil about feet and hands. You think you are free, and you swim and swim, to discover you get nowhere. Then you are pulled downward and the water closes over your head, so you wake up to wonder at your heedlessness, and you strike out furiously, determined on deeper foresight, but imperceptibly the serpent nooses wind about you. I have seen men drowned in kelp, good swimmers they were too. They must have battled strongly for twenty minutes or more, not advancing a foot the while. Then drowsiness came over them and problems overmastered them so that it must have seemed good to sleep and to let the tangle have its way. But if the gods have given you imagination you are projected into all kinds of troubles and difficulties while the body stands safe in the solid world. And when the body is in danger, then some particle of the brain busies itself and takes charge of things so that the other self in you is perfectly complacent and contented, serenely confident that difficulties can be overcome and that the end is not at hand. So, finding myself looped up with a coil about my chest, some inward monitor bade me stop and take notice, bade me think and plan a little, bade me consider the way of a man in a tangle. The inner man made a kind of friendly discourse, showing how it were better to swim on one's back holding the head high, which meant the loosing and losing of my bundle of clothes. He told me that it was not really important that I should be in a hurry, that luck was with me because I had struck the kelp patch at right angles instead of getting between the lanes of weed, that I was a doubly damned fool to be in the mess, or to be there at all when a pleasant world with pleasant friends lay to be explored. Over and over again the inner man told me those things as I paddled myself over the kelp field, looking up at the stars. Presently he ceased to concern himself and withdrew, leaving me very cold and very hungry, and close enough to the ship to make out its hull and to read the name *Chilota*, in letters of white, and telling myself that I was incurring quite an unnecessary amount of trouble one way and another, and had indeed landed on bed rock, seeing that I was as naked and empty-handed as when first I came into the world.

5

The other part of the adventure contracts to a narrow section. Once on board, the smell of the cargo told me all. Nothing on earth could resemble that odor of sealskins in salt pickle. I looked down the companionway into the little cabin and saw by the light of the lantern the crew of two, fast asleep. So I went down and secured an ulster that hung on a peg. No sooner had I felt its warmth than the world became a kinder and easier place. The search for food came next, then, much refreshed, and quite as if I had done everything a hundred times, I looked for a place to sleep and found it in an empty bunk above the snoring captain. What I would insist upon is the feeling of ordinariness that filled me. I was trespassing, burglarizing, stealing and doing all kinds of things that were technically wrong, but they were things that satisfied human needs, and no sense of strangeness, much less of wrongness, was in me. I did not even go about on tiptoe, and when I dropped a can of condensed milk the racket did not worry me in the least. I remember perfectly well that I thought over the ethics of the situation before I dropped off to sleep, not thinking seriously, but in a scrappy kind of way. It came to me, as it has come to me many a time since when I have broken the prohibition law, that the act of the majority could have no moral claim on the minority where self-regarding matters were concerned. I am not preaching but stating a fact. And things as they were with me are not at all as my reading of fiction had led me to believe they would be.

What is strangest of all is that in the morning the captain and his crew of one man arose, dressed, and went on deck without noticing the presence of a stranger in the cabin. I saw them, for I awoke at the first noise, though I lay still, having it in mind to disclose myself when the old man had finished his breakfast. But my plan went wrong. For when the smell of glorious coffee mingled with the smell of good Brazilian tobacco came to me, my determination went to nothing. I put my head out of the companion hatch and there by the tiller saw the captain and his man drinking steaming coffee, while a brass kettle boiled merrily on one of those French alcohol stoves that seem to toast, to boil eggs, to fry chops by magic. The old man was laughing as he talked, but when I said "Good-morning!" instead of something more appropriate, he became immensely serious. "How did you get there?" he asked, then added, "This is a devil of a note!" I thought that he was under the vague impression that many had boarded his ship, so assured him that I was alone. When I tried to explain a violent fit of sneezing took me.

Now that particular adventure ends there, because the old man developed a broad streak of hospitality, especially after he had found that I was no green hand with a ship, that I would not want to jump ship at the first port we touched, that I would not want wages. Especially he wanted to be assured that I was physically clean, for cleanliness and order were the man's gods. It was good to look at the ship, to see its polished brass, its scrubbed deck, its paint and varnish. "It is a piece of Denmark, my ship," he told me. "I am a Dane and my man's a Dane. We are Jorgensons both but not kin. And Denmark's the tidiest, comfortablest, quietest land in the wide world. Once the English spoiled Copenhagen—by the way what are you?" He looked sternly at me.

"Irish," I said, lying readily.

"I was afraid you were English," he went on. "A Dane can't forget that Nelson, who pirated at Copenhagen."

In spite of all his prejudices the man had a fineness about him. There was that about him which would have made him welcome anywhere; I think his cleanness of body coupled with his cleanness of mind constituted his lovable qualities. From the viewpoint of a pedant he would have stood an ignorant fellow for he could not write, though he read a little; and he held fast to queer notions, such as believing that the earth was a hollow sphere, and much more that struck me as odd and amusing. But what difference should that belief make in his navigation? For he went through the world like a king wearing a crown of self-confidence. There was no warp in him.

"Do you drink for pleasure or is it a habit?" he asked me one day. "If for pleasure we'll take a drink of whiskey together," he went on. We were sailing northward, along Broad Reach, and I was at the tiller, warmly clad in a suit of blue serge that he had bought for a shore-going suit and which fitted me very well.

"It's not for me to be preaching," he said, after we had drunk, "but at sea there's nothing wrong in chalking up the latitude and longitude for a man going by rule of thumb, as the saying is. You are drifting. Drifting. Your world isn't real. You think you are breaking away from authority, as you said. I tell you you are drifting before every wind and current that blows or flows, and you'll wind up a derelict, or else a hulk in the Sargasso Sea. What a man's got to do is to steer his ship. Hold a straight course. Have all shipshape on board and make for his landfall. You mustn't be led off your course by fear, or by storm, or by other people's opinion, or by pain, or by notions. Especially not by notions. It isn't adventure to yaw before changing winds. It's to keep headed for a port. That's the real adventure. Fighting to hold your own. Fighting to prove to yourself that you can fight, that you are strong, that you can depend on yourself."

We sailed through the straits, headed north along the Argentine coast and steered for Port Julian where we unloaded. Time and time again the old man fell into long discourse, not so much talking as thinking aloud with solemn patience. I thought, and I still think, that the old philosophers and Biblical characters were exactly like him, and that there may have been many a hundred other men of wisdom who talked to an inattentive world, but only in few cases had some listener been Boswell-minded enough to remember and record. Many of his shafts flew wide, but some hit the mark for me. You understand that he had not elaborated any theory about the origin and destiny of man, but he had thought deeply on many of the problems of life. Nor did a charge of inconsistency worry him. "Things ought to fit," he said. "They ought to fit as when you lay down the keel of a ship, and build true. But they don't. They don't. In life you get a piece of timber that won't go in anywhere, and yet you keep it somehow. . . . It's a man's job to work out excellence in himself, and around himself. . . . This Darwin who sailed hereabouts years ago worked out an idea, they tell me, about how man and animals branched off the same stem, as you might say. Well, the Churchmen took one side and Darwin another, then all the world lined up. Don't you see the foolishness of it all? There they were, the two parties, each thinking they had all the truth there was, not seeing that there might come some new discovery showing that each of them had some bit of truth and neither all of it. Both might be partly right and partly wrong. When a real truth comes up there can't be any more arguing about it than there can be about twice two making four. There can't be any more doubt about the truth than there can be about the pole star. . . . You got to remember that there may be truths too fine for the mind of man to catch on to yet awhile. There's as much difference between the minds of men as there is between a plank that a boy paddles on across a pond and a full-rigged ship. Both can navigate in their own way, but the same rules of navigation won't serve for both. . . . If a man's convinced of a thing he won't be in a sweat because others don't see it his way. And a man's convinced of the truth of a thing when it works well in his own life. . . . Fancies and theories are only workable when they stand the windy, out-of-door life. . . . The sensiblest question one man can ask another is 'What port are you bound for?' And it's a question every man's got to ask himself. The ship without a port's like to be a danger to navigation and so destroyed pretty soon one way or another. I don't mean that in any religious way, but in a solid, everyday way. You got to head for a port in life, and on board yourself you've got to have discipline and judgment and staying power. . . . A man's like a ship. Working into crowded waters he's got to be at ease. Not only to seem to be at ease, you understand, but to be at ease. I want to bring this little craft of mine into a river, among ships-of-war, clippers, racing yachts, colliers and Lamport and Holt passenger steamers, doing it so shipshape that they'll all like to watch because I'm at ease. A man's got to be that way somehow with his equals, his inferiors and his superiors. He's got to do his job well and handily, not thinking that all eyes are on him but forgetting the eyes and the spy-glasses and the binoculars, because the chances are that them that's watching couldn't do the job nearly as handily. . . . There's a whole world of difference in knowing about a thing, and knowing a thing. The first's the talkers. The second's the doers. When the time of stress comes it's the man who knows the thing that takes charge. The man who only knows about it gets put under hatches as a nuisance."

Those flashes I remember, but they did not leap forth like that. The old man would stop and ponder often, then come out with some distinguished instance to prove his philosophy. And in his stories, which were always of an autobiographical cast, he looped and turned and twisted, quite in the Conrad manner of telling a tale, going back to pick up forgotten strands, running into long parentheses, shooting ahead, considering side issues.

CHAPTER IV

Life Fresh and Pungent

I

THE idea of becoming a cogwheel in the world's machinery stuck in me, but I wanted to be a wheel, not a point on the rim of one. That is why, at San Julian Bay, I chose to go without any purpose other than to wander to the foothills of the Andes, rather than to ship to Europe in the *Bootle*, a barkentine that lay there loading wool, and hides, and tallow. I jerked myself out of a great desire to walk from San Julian to Santa Cruz, and then south to where Magellan's *Santiago* suffered shipwreck, because having noted the distance I wondered how it came to pass that Magellan's men could have wasted all those weeks, and have suffered all that hardship and hunger and thirst, when they might have accomplished the journey in a week at the most, in a country where game abounded and where, as I knew, it would be easily possible to get food without weapon. I made the journey afterwards on foot, and found it all pleasant enough; so I came to the conclusion that when in Patagonia, Magellan's men had been the victims of a baseless fear, because of their imaginings. Physical courage has much to do with custom and a sailor in a new land may well fear that at which a landsman would laugh; while the landsman at sea may turn pale and tremble at that which is all in the day's work to the seaman. There is no way to tell cowardice from courage sometimes. A fear may be caution.

I jerked myself out of that desire, as I say, and went to work with an odd company, bossing the loading of the *Bootle*, and, with the money thus earned, I bought a couple of horses and gear. So the way lay open for limitless adventure, and much of that adventure I have told in my books, with a certain amount of imaginative trimmings. I have elaborated and transmuted because I could not help doing so; and I could not help doing so because, almost unconsciously, some particle in my brain insisted that to foreshorten here, and to color there, here to add and there to diminish, would make for a sort of completeness. If you drag something from its context you must needs trim edges, satisfying yourself with the comforting and uplifting conclusion that Art betters Nature.

There were, during those three years and more, happenings that I thought to be cardinal events in my life, but which soon paled into insignificance. There was my enlistment in the Chilean army during the Balmaceda-Montt trouble and my desertion two days later. There was a silly gesture when I thought to make myself important in a political way by writing furious pamphlets against those who offered a bounty for the ears of Indians, and all that came of it was a jail sentence by a very nonchalant young deputy governor who smoked cigarettes and drank wine while he questioned me, not so much curious about the case in hand as about myself, and my opinions, and my hopes and aims and expectations. It would not be politic to tell his name because he is now an important figure, and one thing would lead to another in the telling. But he turned out to be graciousness itself to me in that little town because hardly had I looked around the prison cell when there came a soldier telling me that I was wanted at the government house. Being arrived, a servant took me to a room where a dinner suit and other suitable clothes were laid out for me to wear. Then, after bathing and dressing, I was summoned downstairs where a dinner table with napery and silver and cut-glass was set. So it was easy to act in a composed manner when the young deputy came in. It was easy to play the guest, and, playing, to forget how things really were. It was easy and pleasant too to eat with leisureliness, and to exchange ideas with courtesy, and to exclude subjects about which we might differ, and to play chess while we smoked and drank wine, and, very much later, to get to music with my host handling the violin in masterly way while I accompanied. Then, at parting, he asked me at what time I wished to be called, and I had the lucky thought to say at a little before eight, eight o'clock being the time of the roll call in the cuartel. So I slept in a pleasant bed, and, like the character in the story, so comfortably that the night was a fleeting minute, and there I was in the cuartel on time. At that time, too, I had money for it was after many months in the Andes where, with two Gauchos and three Indians as partners and companions, I had been capturing wild horses which we sold to the government, half tamed. And it came to pass that one evening, while at dinner with my guardian host, I discovered that he had some burden on his mind the which he made me privy to, a burden that could be lightened with a portion of the money I possessed. So I found myself able to relieve him without pressure to myself, and, as it came about, something had been going on somewhere which culminated and coincided with my release.

Then there was a glorious time around that great inland sea about which the maps are noncommittal, which runs up out of the straits, and spreads out at the foot of the southern Andes. It is a magic sea, with many wrecks of strange ships that have sailed up wrong passages, on its shores. Along the sands move a strange pageant of hurrying life. I have seen vast herds of huanacos there, a thousand and more of the graceful creatures, the watchful guards of the herd standing on some hill, the young ones dancing in queer clumsy gracefulness. There were birds, sea birds and birds of the mountains and plains; swift gray rheas darting with easy movement; scissor-tails with their nests so thickly close that one must step with care, and often the mighty flock of them starting up to move in darting play, their multitudinousness was like that of a swarm of summer midges. There were grave and trusting penguins that stood, fearing nothing; happy, screaming gulls; great albatrosses that swept up against the wind as though a wish had been translated into action. Sometimes I have lain on my back, looking idly at the sky, and have chanced to see a speck which might have been taken for a mote; but the mote grew and grew, became a thing cloud-high, dropped out of the blue as a stone drops, then took shape as a condor that hovered, watchful and suspicious. Out of the bush-covered cliffs would tumble and scurry big-bodied

Vapor ducks, very effectively drawing attention away from their nests by their clatter, scattering into the water and leaving a wake behind them. There were sea-hens too, brave birds that fiercely attacked the trespasser, sometimes dealing a man a severe blow on the head with their wings. There were glorious flamingoes, living flames; and wrens; and humming birds; and gray upland geese; and eagle owls. So I often look back with longing to mornings in Patagonia when the world was alive with twittering, screaming, whistling, warbling life. There were colors of earth and air and water too many for the eye to detect; there were sounds too many for the ear to know. To be abroad and attentive at the rising of the sun was to be dazzled and bewildered; it was to be filled with wonder at the larger spirit behind all that life and activity.

Quite surprisingly, one day, I and my companion came upon a clearing at the mouth of a valley that wound into the Andes and lost itself among high mountains. Three or four houses were there, and a few sheep grazed by a shining lake. The first man we saw we took to be an Indian by his dress and horsemanship, but found that he was no native. He spoke a tongue strange to both of us, but which we found later to be Cymric, then we learned that he and two others had trekked south and west from Chuput some years before, taking their wives and children. For Chuput, on the east coast, had been settled by Welsh in the year 1867, and the settlers had retained their old Welsh customs and language. I went to Chuput later and found a pastoral folk of a spirit that made me feel as if I had stepped into the kind of life that Dorothy Osborne had lived and written about.

Many another time, in quite unlooked-for places, I found people who had sought and found a quiet corner. I would dare say that there is not a place anywhere, on that vast map of Patagonia, which looks so desolate without marked towns, where kindly folk may not be met within a three days' ride. Nor did they find life a perpetual drudgery living thus. They were like those robust and enterprising sheep to be seen in any flock, always in the lead, discovering fat pastures and clear streams.

2

A different sort of adventure came when, pricked by conscience as I remembered old Jorgenson's advice and because of my objectless course, I decided to become a cogwheel in the economic machine. It was always spiritual agony at such times. A cogwheel was very well to think about, but it meant fixation and regularity and fitting in, besides much more that seemed unpleasant while the interesting wild world went on and on, full of high and splendid secrets. Life was so unutterably brief and so much lay waiting to be seen and experienced. But I forced myself to bondage, as I chose to consider it. I engaged in estancia work, and, because there were certain things which I did which others could not do, I won quick promotion, that struck me as being very unwelcome indeed. I was taken from horseback riding, which I enjoyed, and was made manager of the shearing shed, which I did not enjoy at all. For a short time the novelty interested me; the great galpon with its chorus of a thousand bleating sheep, the insistent click of half a hundred pairs of sheep shears, the shouting and singing and rough joking of the men, the chanteys sung by the laborers at the wool-press, the noises outside as shepherds brought new flocks for the shearing, the yelling of the men at the sheep-dipping trough. And there were the week-end jamborees when strong drink appeared, without anyone seeming to bring it, when the bunk house became a riot of rough fun and singing and poker playing, and often rough-and-tumble fighting, and more unaffected intercourse of spirits than I have discovered anywhere else. Also there were week-end visits to *boliches* hidden away here and there, joints with something of the atmosphere of Poosie Nancie's place in them, though there were no women. It was a womanless country, Patagonia.

Miserable places most of the joints were, shanties slapped together with a few hundred sheets of corrugated iron, with barroom floor of corrugated iron beaten flat, with shelves crowded with bottles that held national drinks of strange and fiery composition. Other shelves were crowded and jammed with French tobacco in azure wrappings, blankets, horse gear, clothing, *capas*, jams and pickles, cigars, canned goods, ammunition, accordions, and always an odd assortment of Richard J. Fox's New York *Police Gazette*. In those days when James Corbett and John L. Sullivan strove for mastery we were betting on the result of the New Orleans affair months after the decision had been given. So boxing became a popular sport and one *boliche* had its ring where some of us fought many rounds on Sundays. At times the exercise became a sort of unrestrained boxing, as when we matched a Gaucho named Romero against a native of Chiloe. For they came to rebel against cramped conditions in the way of rounds, and gloves, and referees and time-keepers; rejected them indeed as unsatisfactory. So when Romero rasped his opponent's ear the Chiloe man snatched a knife from the girdle of one of the bystanders, seeing which Romero took the first weapon that came to hand, a rawhide whip with a hide-bound iron handle, a formidable thing when the hide lash is grasped and secured by being wrapped around the hand, and when the wielder of it is purposeful. If you cultivate imagination you shall see the two like a pair of Roman gladiators, alert and wary, with the Chiloe man presently making a slash at Romero's belly but not getting home, and the other bringing his fearful weapon down on his opponent's cheek with such force that the fellow spat blood and broken teeth, then, furious with pain, leaped forward and made a cut that changed the color of Romero's shirt from white to crimson. At that point, in his ignorance of rules and because of excitement at the sight of blood and the sight of his friend near being worsted, Antonio of Peru picked up a crowbar and would have driven the point of it into Chiloe's defenceless back had not Big Robert used a stone gin bottle club-wise to fell Antonio. Now had the white-haired rascal Cortes, who owned the *boliche*, regarded the affair as stimulating and exciting, and had he continued to stand as spectator aloof on his doorstep all might have gone well enough, with the conflict of stupidities ending in vituperation as so many of them did, after a little superfluous blood had been let. But instead the silly man must needs think of his property rather than the establishment of order, and, by way of bringing peace through fear, which never can be done, what did he do but fire a revolver into the midst of things, killing a handsome collie that had followed Jock of Arran for many a month. Thereupon Jock, who had been smoking peacefully, lost his philosophical balance. To the *boliche* he ran, developing as he went a far more flexible English vocabulary than any of us had thought him capable of, for his tongue was mainly Gaelic. There were resulting advantages that came from his gift of tongues, for Cortes understood the threats, which he would never have done had they been uttered in sonorous Gael, and, understanding, he fled, gained the house and slammed his door; but Jock, in a sort of rapture of revenge, picked up a log, balanced it as a Highland athlete does a caber, then launched it at the door which went crashing. You would have said that Jock, a good wrestler, was transfigured into glory had you seen him come out holding Cortes high, had you seen him fling the *boliche* man into his own house through his own glass window, had you seen him pitching through the casement bottles and clothes and a beer keg, and much more. So those who had been spectators at the fight dimly felt that there were more interesting things afoot than the boxing match between those unskilled men, and into the *boliche* they went, whereupon the angry fighters suddenly cooled. Unconcerned with problems of conduct and duty and ownership, the invaders fell upon the store stock, some of them eating and drinking with much fraternal embracing; others of them, in desire to please their absent partners and friends, loading what they could into their saddlebags. And all the while Cortes stood aside, complaining, and announcing reprisals, and deploring the lack of chivalry, and saying to those who could hear how fearful a thing it was that so mighty a matter should arise out of the death of a dog, and regretting that resentment should translate itself into action in that fashion. But Jock conducted the after part of his revenge in large way and brilliant. For before he went, a thought struck him. Indeed he had his foot in the stirrup when he told me that he had something to do and was glad that it had not escaped him. Going to Cortes he ordered him to bring forth his cash box, and when the man did as ordered, though not without protest and not until after much physical urging, Jock called the other men about him. Next, Jock made a short and formal speech, the tenor of which was to the effect that what he was about to do would enable many to lead more free and unrestrained lives; and then he took out papers which were orders to pay Cortes varied amounts, signed by shearers, and wool-press men, and shepherds and laborers, men of many nationalities who lived within a circle of fifty miles' radius or thereabouts, all of which papers represented amounts due for drink. In many cases the men had signed a blank paper and the terms had been filled in by Cortes after the debtor had gone to sleep. Some of the amounts, indeed, were of so large a sum that the man must have shorn sheep for a month to be enabled to pay them. Jock, however, concerned himself not at all about individual cases, but put the papers in a heap, piled what burnables he could find behind the bar, for this took place inside, then arranged four square oil cans full of oil about the blaze, laid the dead body of his collie on the heap and after setting fire to the pyre danced to his horse like a light tripping youth and as we rode told me that he did it all as a matter of enthusiasm rather than duty, and had gained much satisfaction by the incident. So the *boliche* became white ashes.

3

Then there is the affair of Marta and Penguin islands by which I was reported drowned. Big Robert and Abram and I went to Buenos Aires where we bought a sloop which we sailed down to the straits country, and we might have gone on and on, up the west coast and by way of the Aleutian Islands and so south and west to Australia, had we not found fortune. For we loaded up with provisions, not forgetting luxuries which commenced with condensed milk and went, by imperceptible degrees, to ginger ale and wines and cigars; then we sailed south enjoying everything, nor on our small world were there anxieties or ambitions. But presently fortune came to us who did not seek it. We touched an island where a party of sealers were engaged in their loathsome business and to them a sealskin seemed a trifling thing to exchange for a bottle of mock champagne which we had brought for private consumption but rejected because of received opinions of what champagne should be. Again we put in one night at a cove off Wellington Island, or at an island near it, where we found a party of Peruvian adventurers in a sloop, who were glad to trade ostrich feathers and feather mats of great beauty for cheese and chocolate and French wine. After that we took a cast to the south of Useless Bay where a party of Austrians were reported to be gold digging, and having found them after some trouble there was more active trading. Then we tired of trade, our hold being full of cargo. The sharp break in commercial activity came when we lay near Balmaceda glacier, as it has since been named. That day it was a beryl-blue wonder, beryl-blue and silver, and the sea was a mirror reflecting it. We had come upon the glacier without expecting it, and the sight was as stupendous and sudden to the senses as is a crash of thunder from a blue sky. The ice field seemed to come out of the heavens, for no line of separation appeared where ice-blue sky met ice-blue glacier. Seeing it, you would have said that at last you had reached the world's end where an ice wall ran down and down eternally, and up and up forever. When we rowed ourselves ashore it seemed like a desecration to ruffle the water and mar the picture that lay mirrored beneath us.

"What's it all for? Why are we fooling away ourselves like this?" said Big Robert. "We don't see the world we're livin' on. We don't know it. And there's places to be seen. Calavera Valley now. Take that. It'd strike a man dumb to see it. God Almighty!"

"A man ought to see things," said Abram. "Let me tell you. If I was God judging folks, like the preacher says, I'd ask 'em where they'd been. It's natural when you come to look at it. Here's the world with places like this and none taking no notice. I'd put a head on 'em and tell 'em to go back to earth and see what's to be seen. . . . Hand me that plug of tobacco."

Abram tore off a corner with his strong teeth, and ruminated.

"There's the falls of Zambezi," I said. "I've always wanted to see them."

"Well, why not go to Africa?" asked Big Robert.

"I'm game," said Abram.

"By way of the Falklands, Tristan da Cunha, Capetown," added Robert.

And it looked easily possible, because we had lived on our craft through storms and most outrageous seas, and youth is eternal, and the things we feared were not things of the sea, but men.

"It'd be a long run between the Malvinas and Tristan," said Abram reflectively. "But then not longer'n Buenos Aires to the straits. We done that."

"Yes. We done that," agreed Robert.

We said no more then, but we considered the matter, and the next morning we headed for a port in Awcud where we proposed to sell our cargo and provision ourselves for Africa. But there we touched government and its officers, and, being questioned, found it wise to declare that the sloop and its cargo belonged to Señor Serao of the straits country, and that the port to which we were destined was Punta Arenas. There was contraband abroad. There were harbor dues to pay. Had we tried to sell any of our cargo there would have been much questioning, and we knew not what, for those were the days of the aftermath of the Balmaceda civil war when matters political were involved beyond our understanding. So we stuck close to the Punta Arenas tale, and testified fervently to our regard for the rights of our mythical owner, for otherwise of necessity we must have been impounded with all that stuff on board, and no very clear title to much of it.

"Then," said an officer of the port to me, "you will be glad to do a service," and after the slightest hesitation I offered to do what he wished.

It came out that a young lieutenant and a soldier were waiting passage to Punta Arenas and it would, the officer told me, cut across those difficulties which resulted from an elaborate organization, if we took them with us to Punta Arenas. He quoted and gave credit to Cato, saying, "The utility of my country is the spring that guides my actions," so looking at the matter one way everything seemed friendly, but looking at it another we three had to brace ourselves to new difficulties.

Now the two soldiers were pleasant fellows, but necessity has sharp teeth, as the Arabs say, and something had to be done to rid ourselves of our company. But that company was alert. It was suspicious in a veiled way. It tended too to be assertive when we headed, by private arrangement, to run south and around Cape Horn, where it displayed knowledge of geography. We had tried to run down between Santa Inez and Clarence islands, but they knew and told us they knew.

Our chance came when we rounded Cape Forward and found the open water of San Fernando Bay. The morning had been sunless, with occasional bursts of wind, but when we cleared the mountain shelter we headed into a gray chopping sea, and a wind squall came that made the sea lay over until her starboard deck was awash. Northward nothing could be seen but heavy, white-capped rollers. Sometimes the air was full of snow and then our horizon shrank until we seemed to be in a narrow world out of which we might run into unknown dangers in a couple of cables' length.

You must understand that there were two views of the situation, ours, and the viewpoint of the soldiers. We knew our ship, knew our seas, knew weather, but to them everything seemed terrible, being strange. The ferocious threatening barking of a watchdog may seem a fearful thing to a stranger at whom the dog runs with bared teeth, but to the owner of the dog it is nothing but an outward show, and he, bare-handed, may take the dog by the throat without knowing the shadow of a fear. It was something like that with us. To our passengers those waves that reached high, then struck us, seemed to be things as hard and unyielding as solid rock. They feared we would be overwhelmed. They stood pale and nerveless seeing things which left us unmoved—and yet they retained their dignity. There's the fine thing of it. But they could not have raised a hand to help us had we found occasion to call on them.

Presently we ran into quieter water in the lee of Lomas Mountain, though we could not see the land because of the thickening snowstorm; then the soldiers brightened up, saying that the storm had blown over, which was natural to think. But when we started on the other tack they understood. So there followed explanations, and the young officer, in a tone of acute distress, begged us to anchor or to put them ashore if we were determined to go on. He shot out questions in a way that showed both fear and anger, pride too. How far was it to the Catholic settlement on Dawson? What was the country like? Were the Indians dangerous? He also let us know that he considered our achievements questionable, to say the least. The end of it was that we came to swift decision and dropped anchor in quiet water, so close in that we could see the bushes outlined against the gray sky. Then we put our soldiers ashore, giving them creature comforts, food in plenty, and a tent, and blankets, and pointed out to them a way over the mountain which they could take with ease, and which would bring them to the mission station.

"We are going to Africa," said I, as we parted on the shore, and I felt a warmth about my heart for both men, especially for the young officer who had a gallant way with him.

But we did not reach Africa. That night we lay off Port Famine, once called the City of Philip, but no city was there. It was the settlement started by Sarmiento, who left men there then sailed away, but "never more returned," as the record ran. It was the place where Cavendish lay for a winter the time that Thomas Lodge wrote his *Rosalynde*.

Two nights later we were like a straw in a whirlpool, our sail ripped away, in a water that seemed to boil like a cauldron, the darkness so great that standing at the tiller I could not see the mast. We imagined that we were headed for Tierra del Fuego but were powerless to do anything at all. If we talked I do not remember it. One part of me was full of fear while a quiet and unafraid me noticed things with a sense of futility, the black waters, the lightning, the strange way in which the mast stood silhouetted against the sudden white glare that seemed to split open the sky, the breaking loose of our water cask and its rolling about the deck for a short time. Victor Hugo's story of the man and the cannon flashed into my mind, but the memory is as vivid as anything that took place that night. Then came the crash that made me give way at the knees. I can best describe it this way: Suppose yourself to be in a railway car, to feel it lifted high, as by a giant's hand, then dropped with a crash so that you heard the timbers of it smashing. Well, it was like that. Then, because the sloop was firmly fixed, great waves broke over it. One moment Abram and I were clinging to the mast and by a lightning flash we saw Robert holding on to the stay, behind him like a mighty black wall the coming wave. I remember saying to myself, "Now for it," and tightening my grip, and ducking my head. . . . I remember being lifted and, as it were, my body streaming in the water as a pennant streams. By the next flash I looked for Robert but saw only the stay. Astonishment filled me. That was all. Just sheer astonishment. We never saw him again.

It seemed all right somehow that Abram should be shouting things in my ear. I did not hear the beginning of what he said but I caught, ". . . no use . . . breaking up. . . . So long!" Then I knew myself to be alone. And ideas commenced to shape themselves. "This reef now. It must be between Marta and Penguin islands. . . . If so it might be possible to make land by swimming. The wind! What was the set of it?" I found myself wishing I had given the matter thought. After what seemed to be a long interval I became conscious of the fact that the lay of the ship had changed as if it had swung on a pivot. The deck was sloping to port. Now I am quite positive that I did not intend deliberately to loose my hold. And yet I did that very thing when the next wave broke. I seemed to be holding on as firmly as ever, but the thought came that I could not stand the strain of that wave and then I was battling in the water, wondering at myself for being such a fool as to have kept my boots on. Perhaps there were long periods of insensibility while my body strove mechanically. I do not know. I had always been at home in the water. What I do know is that strange ideas came to me and expressed themselves in words. "Conflict of forces is the very devil," I remember saying to myself. Again the words seemed to frame themselves, "It seems a long time, but it may all be packed in a little space." But I felt sure that I would not drown. I said as much to myself, and strangely remembered a woodcut I had seen in my copy of *Robin Hood* where Guy Gisborne had forced Robin to his knees.

All of that stands out with remarkable clearness and I have recalled it dozens of times since. I remember too how it came to me that it would be better to turn on my back, head away from shore, so that when pitched over I should fall on my face. And so I did fall, but not before a sharp pain in my left knee had brought me out of a half sleep. Then came a furious struggle as I clawed at stones which vanished in my grasp, and as I felt myself being dragged backward by wave after wave. The trivial incident of finding a rock that held firm changed everything in the world. I became a person again, very tired, but able to do things. I wanted to rest very much indeed. All that storm and stress seemed very far away although I could hear its noise, murmuringly. It seemed to be round the corner and out of my sphere of interest. Something came to my mind about waves hung on clouds, which seemed to be utter nonsense.

When I awoke, my mind grasped everything before I had opened my eyes. I was stiff as an old horse when I stood, but a little way off I saw Abram fast asleep. Being roused he came to a clear-cut realization of things at once. We were on Marta Island, after all; but our sloop had gone and everything with it. And Marta is no more than a pie-shaped rock less than a mile across, with a little grass and a few bushes growing on its summit, but tens of thousands of birds' nests are there. So for a time we lived on raw eggs, with a few mussels which we gathered at low water. During that time we saw two schooners which passed so close that we could make out the men; and three steamers. One of the latter stood in close so that we could read the name, *Volumnia* of Hamburg. So we waved and shouted, and there were some on board who waved back at us in friendly way, much as people wave from a train to children. But that was all. There was no rescue of castaways.

"Damn' idiots," said Abram. "Do they think we're here for fun?"

4

The incident led to a long and inconclusive argument about whether man thought man worth saving, and we were very vehement regarding writers of romance who never failed to have stranded men picked up when seen. And when we were picked up there was no more romance about the happening than about finding a stray dog. Excitement would have been regarded as a disgrace to either party. Exclamations would have been ranting. Indeed of all the tricks that writers of romance have worked off on an innocent public, the trick of making men eloquent is the worst, if we except the introduction of a woman in impossible places. The rescue was like this. Abram and I, loafing about exactly as men will loaf when they have nothing to do, came across a human skeleton and were idly wondering about it when we heard distant laughter. It did not strike us as being strange, nor did it excite us in any way.

"Someone's about," said Abram.

"Sounds like it," I answered.

We went in the direction of the sounds, came to the edge of the cliff, and there below us was a party of five men with a boat drawn up on the beach, and a net spread on the sand.

Seeing us, "How goes it?" shouted one of the men in Spanish, and another, a jolly-looking fellow in a corduroy coat, said, heartily, "Come on down."

"Got any tobacco to spare?" asked Abram, then the two of us clambered down the cliff and joined the fishing party, evidently a band of jolly ne'er-do-wells.

I would like to pretend to some whiff of romance, but there was none; absolutely none. They accepted everything in a matter-of-fact way, and when we told them, off-handedly, that we must have lost at least twenty thousand dollars' worth of stuff, one of them, a Frenchman, shrugged his shoulders and said, "Wealth is timid." That was all. Five minutes after we met it was as if we had been acquainted for years. We were cooking fish, drinking maté and smoking, laughing and joking and comparing notes, and we sat about the fire late into the night. The next day we gathered eggs, thousands of them, goose eggs, duck eggs. And late that afternoon, the tide being low, a steamer anchored off the north end of Penguin Island, some five miles from where we were. So, the wind being fair, we hoisted our rag of a sail and went out to it, playing bumboat, as the old term had it. It was a French boat out of Bordeaux, bound for Peru, and the passengers were superior. They regarded us as curiosities and made remarks about us and our appearance, and generally held us to be inferior creatures, but that last may have been partly our fault for none of us admitted to a knowledge of French except our Frenchman, Domange, and he disappeared into the bowels of the ship with one of the crew early in the proceedings. Anyway the passengers did as people in a strange land always do, and regarded us, supposed natives, as standing on a lower level than themselves.

However, the purser bought our fish and our eggs, making his own price, which was a low one. But I took small notice of the trade because my eyes were on a new thing. There was a young woman blue-eyed and clear of complexion who moved with the swiftness and grace of a bird, and who wore a white scarf about her neck, and who radiated joyousness. She was the one spot of beauty in a desert of ugliness, the only fine thing I had seen for years. A sort of vague feeling began to take me by which I felt that the light of heaven lay in her presence, dark thunderous clouds elsewhere, and that the light would fade away when she was gone. I wanted to give her something, asking nothing in return except a word of thanks. But I had nothing to give. Then I remembered my great heart-shaped nugget, and worked it up out of its safe corner in the lining of my coat. Even then having it in my hand, I would not have dared to offer it if she had not smiled. Catching her smile I admired her beyond measure, wondered much at my clumsiness, feared that she would not accept the gold as a gift. It took a tremendous effort on my part to step forward and offer it to her, though I felt no shyness whatever in the presence of the other people. I conceived a suspicion that she would not know it to be gold, and felt myself coloring up to my temples as I asked her to take it, speaking in French.

"It is gold," I said.

"How pretty," she responded; "but I cannot buy it."

"You may have it," I told her, and she said, "Oh, no! I could not do that."

I felt resentment then. In a cumbersome way I said something about knowing where there was much more of it.

"But I don't understand," she said. "Why do you give it to me?" and all I could do was to shrug my shoulders and offer it.

"It is very kind of you," she said. "Do you really want me to take it?"

"A splendid gift!" exclaimed a young officer, who appeared from nowhere. But him I disregarded. And I was quite overwhelmed when she did accept it, inexplicably overwhelmed. In my mind ran a rush of ideas. It was the manifest duty of a man to do something in the world. A man should stand in such a position that there would be no narrowness or one-sidedness about him. There was a duty of material progress. A man should look for a companion who would supply refinement, serenity. It was clear that I had to get out of what struck me for the first time as a dehumanizing life.

It possibly reads madly, but it is as things were.

Then the girl went off with her prize and things became muddled. Some of the passengers, being of the sort that think to lay up treasures for themselves in heaven by giving away cold potatoes on earth, brought forth worn-out and discarded clothes and offered them. Our fellows took them, which showed a fineness of spirit because not one had any use for old patent-leather shoes, or for Parisian shirts that had passed into the late evening of life, or for a soiled dress coat that would neither fit nor keep a body warm, and every one of the gifts went over the boat's side as soon as we were clear of the ship. But of the last part of the visit I retain small recollection because I felt annoyed at hearing someone in the saloon playing Schumann's "Warum" very badly indeed, and my fingers itched to do it better, for I knew that I could. I went a few steps and looked down through the skylight, and there was my maiden of the gold-gift at the piano. I think that I struggled a little to put my goddess back on her pedestal, but she would not stand.

To complete the comedy, what did our Frenchman, Domange, do at the time of leaving but commence a tirade in perfect French, the French of polite Paris. He had taken many drinks and was like a highly charged electric machine. He asked disgustedly what had become of French politeness. He wanted to know if those on board had ever thought to regard humanity as an organism instead of a mere mass of units. He said that he misunderstood the customs of decent society if the conduct of those who had regarded us with disdain was indicative of present-day French manners. He advised the purser, who had cheated us, to practice truthfulness and honesty and humility and obedience, but especially to avoid covetousness. He told them that there was more savagery in the streets of any French city than in all Patagonia. Finally, his stream of eloquence running low, he declared himself to be a philosophical anarchist and a disciple of Bakunin.

Part of his discourse was very fine, part of it very ridiculous, but, as I say, he had taken a good deal of rum and so managed to work himself into a condition bordering on hysteria. Then, at the last moment, Abram came and bade me "So long," saying that he had shipped as O.S. because they were a man short.

We were all very casual in that place and time. I think any display of emotion would have been regarded as something like stagecraft.

INTO THE WILDERNESS AS AN ORNITHOLOGIST

BOOK IV

The Old Instinct

CHAPTER I

My Island Year

I

THE Frenchman turned out to be a wonderful fellow with large experience and considerable capability in many fields of effort. He had been adventurous in a drifting and passive kind of way. He told me that he had been in the Foreign Legion; he certainly had crossed the Sahara with Arab slave traders, and by way of the Red Sea and China had reached the Boca, where he worked in a gambling house. From there he went to Spitzbergen, and to Iceland, and to Labrador. At least so he said, and if he did not speak the truth then he had an enviable knowledge of geography. Also he could converse in many tongues, with ease, his own French being variable as touching Apache slang at one end and something very much like the correctness of my old teacher of French at the other. His English had been learned from reading so his vocabulary included startling words; his Spanish was Castilian, or Gaucho, or even Mexican peon, as occasion seemed to advise. He could drop with ease into Austrian, Italian or Danish speech. You would set him down as kindly and gentle and meek as are most of the so-called hard-cases who have passed a great part of their lives among perils and privations.

We had been talking generally, all of us, about hopes and aims, about what we were going to do, and all that kind of thing, as men will. I spoke of an ambition to see some of the ruins I had heard of as existing in Yucatan's jungle.

"A controlled and purposeful life, my boy," the Frenchman said, in exactly those words. "A controlled and purposeful life. That's that you need. Dissipation of energy. That's what we are all guilty of. Now there's my island."

That was the first hint of the island in question, but he went on talking about it, in Spanish, because of a chance remark made by one of the fishermen about something connected with it. Thereafter the talking was done in Spanish, not with any consecutiveness, but running along a certain line in promising fashion until a question or a remark caused matters to run off at a new angle. Subjects jostled and elbowed and thrust one another aside, exactly as they do in the ordinary conversation of more sophisticated people. I gathered that the fishers had picked him up from his island, or more exactly that he had joined them as a man will join another in adventure on a sudden notion. It became clear that there were sheep and horses on the island, for the fishers referred to this horse and that much as people in cities refer to men; I mean that the characteristics of the horses were known, as that this one was rough, another a pacer, a third quick on the rein. It turned out that the Frenchman's relatives owned two thirds and he himself one third of the stock; that he had been in charge of the isle for six months or so; that he lived alone and yearned for company; that the island was a sort of experiment in the production of a long and thick-wooled sheep; that the Frenchman would willingly let any man have his job, with its pay and its freedom from the presence of a boss, if a man could be found. Meanwhile we sailed under a light wind that threatened to drop and to send us to the oars. Now and then the Frenchman passed around a bottle of "square-face" gin.

Presently it appeared that Domange knew me by reputation. A man who had worked in the estancia wool-shed had told him about me.

"At any rate, it's a peaceful place, my island," he said.

"Unreasonably peaceful," I retorted.

He did not know about that. There were compensations for isolation, he insisted. Sane people and clear thinkers had come out of the quiet of Thibet. "You don't know what might come out of a period of quiet," he said. "You ought to try it. I'll turn the island over to you if you like."

For a moment I thought that the drink might be talking, nevertheless in my mind I played with the idea.

"If you had this island now, there'd be a chance for you to digest," he said.

"Digest?" I asked. There were considerable spaces between the things we said, because we were then pulling hard at the oars, the wind having dropped and the set of the tide being against us.

"Every man's got to digest his experiences. Take stock. It's like a man taking the sun at sea. Getting latitude and longitude. It's like getting trash overboard as when we threw those old clothes out. You go on in life loading and loading yourself. . . . In prison I had time to think."

"Well——" I began.

"You get a clear view of things in the quiet. I'm not so sure that it wouldn't be a good thing to catch men at random and put them in the calaboose for awhile."

"Pretty tough on some," said I.

"Not at all. . . . They'd all deserve the punishment as much as any man in prison. . . . Now listen, my boy. Great opportunities seldom present themselves. Here's your opportunity. Solitary confinement on my island. You get pay. You get quiet. You can write over your door, '*Sans Dieu, sans loi, sans maître.*' How about that?"

"Confoundedly lonely," I objected.

"Well, have you ever really experienced solitude? You say you have been looking for experience. Well, there's an experience that comes rarely. Maybe never again."

Then that most amazing Frenchman launched into instances. He named prophets who had gone into the desert, the philosophers who had claimed to lonely attics. He spoke of Teufelsroch. "Away from discordant and clamorous voices they had to get," he said. Presently it began to look to me as if a spell of solitude might not be so bad an experience after all. Then there would be money at the end of it.

"A man worth his salt ought to be able to be alone," he said.

"But you?" I asked.

"Me? I'm different. I drink and drink. This sort of thing." He indicated the five-gallon demijohn of rum he had brought from the steamer. It lay in the bottom of the boat, the head of it sticking out from a piece of sailcloth. "I can't stand solitude. I came with these fellows who happened to land at my place. Came for company's sake."

"Why not two on the island?" I said. "A woman."

"*Mon Dieu!*" he ejaculated. "Two would be worse than one. There were two once and they quarreled. One lived at one end of the island, the other at the other. They were both men. But a man and a woman with nobody else in sight! Impossible. The first marriage in the world ended in murder. . . ."

He broke off there and went to rowing furiously, so I said no more. But as the island came nearer, and when I began to make out things, comfortable looking penguins, the sheep, a spring of water that tumbled over the low cliff in a silver cascade, a flock of birds that rose from the bushes and wheeled screaming, the echo in the bay of the sound of our oars and of our voices, two horses that stood looking at us curiously, the island life commenced to have its strong attractions.

"I'll stop off awhile," I said.

So we put the boat in at a white beach, Domange and I stepped ashore, and after a few words of farewell and promises to meet again the fishers left us. Domange had the demijohn of rum by its two handles, and he held to it with a sort of affection.

"We might as well leave it here under the bushes and come back for it," I said, not knowing how far might be the journey to the house.

"House isn't far. We'll take it with us," answered Domange.

Up the beach, over the little ridge southward, and across a flat we went and so came to a place where the house lay at our feet. It made a notable sight by the side of the bay—a sheltered piece of emerald water nestling in the side of the island. And the island I knew to be that famous Penguin Island which Magellan had used for headquarters, on which Drake had landed, where Cavendish caught all those tens of thousands of penguins which went rotten. The house, comfortably low, had a green painted roof and white walls, and there were chickens and ducks and gray geese all making their pleasant noises, so it seemed to me a very desirable home. The windows had little green curtains, and the door had an entirely unnecessary brass knocker held between the jaws of a good-humored looking lion's head. Two low stone steps led to the door, but so low that I stepped over them. The furniture of the house had been well made by a man handy with tools, and the first thing that struck me as remarkable was a large open fireplace that would hold a good log.

"Why, it's perfect," I said, and the thought struck me that a man who could not be happy there was a colossal failure.

"I make no conditions," said the Frenchman, then went on to make them. If I wanted the job, I would get so much, and then, say every two months, he would come to see how things went. I would be alone except at shearing and lambing time. He told me that he liked me and would be deeply hurt if I did not accept his offer. I would have the use of a boat. When he got to that point and after I had seen the boat, everything fitted together as if we had put the key piece into a puzzle. For the boat was as perfect as the house, clinker built, with sail, and with a winch on shore by which a man could draw the craft high and dry, single-handed, if he hit his landing place with judgment as he should. So having admired we walked over the hills and looked at the six horses, then we caught and saddled a couple and went a-riding over what was to be my new domain. The whole business was handled as simply as that, and in a way that a writer of fiction would never consider credible or convincing.

On the backbone of the island we sat on our horses and looked over the lonely, sailless sea. "If you are lucky you can digest your thoughts and take stock of yourself," said the Frenchman.

"And did you do that?" I asked.

He rolled a cigarette, sighed, shook his head then made answer, "My thought was indigestible. . . . The man before me went insane, and I had to tie him up and somehow he died. Killed him to save myself you might say. So the remembrance of that naturally makes things gloomy. . . . You'll be a fourth king of this land. The first, he disappeared. . . . Now do you want the job? Eh?"

"It's a bit disconcerting," I said.

He flung out a left hand. "There are hopes and possibilities if you have something in yourself to fall back on," he said.

"That's the thing. Something in yourself. But life anywhere can be wholly uninteresting and unattractive. Even in a city."

I considered the situation. "When things are all right a man can sail around," I said. "It would not be so bad." I added, "Plenty of time to think."

"That's the worst of it," he said. "Whenever I found myself thinking, I had to get some drink somehow. It all depends on what you have laid away in memory."

2

For a couple of days we went about, examining this and that, the Frenchman explaining with solemn patience and very earnest about his ideas, and with frequent and interesting parentheses having to do with the peculiarities of people he had met. So we got along very well indeed, especially after I had found clothes in his surplus stock, for we were of a size. I found him a delightful companion, but forgot all about the demijohn and its contents. I had grown accustomed to seeing him mellow late at night and did not so much as suspect all-night drinkings in solitude. Drink, for me, had always stood as an adjunct to companionship.

One morning he came to breakfast and as soon as he sat down I began to make discoveries. He seemed to be looking through me, and the pupils of his eyes were contracted to pin points. He was preoccupied and frequently got up and prowled about the room seeking something. Twice he addressed me, beginning in his ordinary manner, but trailed off in a misty way.

"I'm sure I saw him," he whispered.

"Lost something?" I asked, but he did not hear me.

We were speaking in Spanish.

"He is here," he said hoarsely.

"What's come over you?" I asked, but I might as well have put the question to the table. There fell a silence between us which may have lasted for a couple of minutes, then he fell into a tremendous fit of quite uncontrolled laughter. I had never heard anything like it. It was laughter without any mirth in it. It was a sort of sluggish laughter. That is the only way I can describe it. He ceased as suddenly as he commenced, then sat with his hands hanging at his sides, staring at vacancy. But that lasted only a very short while. Up he leaped, and again went round the room, crouched and hunched in a way that reminded me of a gorilla, and I saw that he had taken from his boot a broad dagger. Then I feared madness, or delirium tremens, so I got to my feet and went round the table, never taking my eye off him. It worried me much that the door was shut, worried me more to remember that it jammed at the bottom and did not open without a good deal of pulling. But I tried artfulness.

"Let's go out for a walk, Domange," I said.

His voice was even and calm and he replied, "Walk with a madman! Not I."

It amazed me to hear the crazed fellow talking that way, amazed me so much that I could not help the flashing of a wonder whether it was I who had lost my wits.

"In such a case a man must be resolute and firm," he added, and there we stood, examining each other. You must know that he talked evenly, quite without excitement.

I became conscious of the fact that I was trembling, and could not trust myself to say anything, but I edged in the direction of the door. Then things ceased to be orderly. With a leap and a wrench I got outside and slammed the door shut, and with one foot braced against the jamb was holding it fast by the handle, while he tugged from inside to force it open. We strove furiously, but when the handle came off I fled, took the fence at a leap and ran along the beach. Why in the stress of all that excitement I should remember the sand dunes, and how they looked like the top of a giant's head, and why there should remain in my mind a picture of the wind-swept sea sand with its tufts of scanty grass, and the distant headland, is all a mystery to me. But I do remember them, and also it stands out clearly in my mind that I noticed the sun breaking through a nebulous cloud. It took an eternal time to get up the little cliff, and when I caught at a tuft which gave way I cursed aloud. But I gained the flat before my pursuer reached the foot of the cliff, so I breathed easier when I came to realize that I was more than a match for him in a run. The thought struck me that I might race him into half sanity, if not sobriety, but I would have to keep him in sight. I ran furiously the while. Another thought struck me. It would be better to come to grips immediately, so I proceeded to put the notion into execution. As soon as his head came in sight I was ready, and when he reached out a hand with his body bent to work himself over the edge of the cliff, I leaped at him. The leap was not clean as it should have been, and I came down in such a way that my arms were around his neck. Next we were both crouched on the cliff edge, and both falling, then down we went into the midst of a shower of loose earth and stones. Somehow he slashed me across the knuckles of my left hand. I carry the faint scar of the wound to this day, but at the time I did not know my hurt. What I did know was that he had lost his knife, and that we were on the sea sand, and that I held him fast gripped, and that we were wrestling and rolling over and over toward the sea. We continued to roll, by my efforts, into the water; then I was above, holding his face down, trying to suffocate him. The process seemed to take a very long time, so long that I began to think it a nuisance, then again to wonder which of the two of us was the madman, then to reflect that I might have acted with more prudent wisdom all through, then to wonder if it was all a real and actual part of my life.

It was a gentle-tempered individual who crawled out of the water some time later, with no more combativeness in him than you would find in a mouse. For a day he was terribly depressed, but all that he seemed to remember was that there had been a disagreeable incident of some kind or other. Once he asked me why I had my hand bound up, but I avoided complications and spoke of a bruise. Twenty-four hours seemed to have been lifted quite out of his conscious life.

3

I pass over the island life.

At one time I saw no human being for close on three months, but I did not know loneliness. Once Domange and I sailed to San Gregorio where we did a great deal of talking with his relative who owned two thirds of the island, and who was very glad indeed to have things fall out so handily, the more because he was about to start for Europe. Then Domange took me to the man who prevented possibility of loneliness and I cannot pass over him without a paragraph, because he was one of the extraordinary men who have come into my life.

He lived in the back-hill country between the straits and the inland sea of which I have written, and his house was a place of most extraordinary disorder what with hides, and bunches of ostrich feathers, and deer horns, and blown shells of ostrich eggs, and curious seashells; besides such oddments as warming pans, a loom, rusty swords, flint-lock guns, ship models, and all kinds of stuff that he had picked up along the seashore, littered about the earthen floor. He must have had a jackdaw inquisitiveness deeply seated in his being. One of the things he had found was a packing case of French silk hats, and he not only wore the hats but used them as containers. Along one side of his room ran a shelf with silk hats, all very much the worse for the passage of time, lined up as an apothecary lines his bottles. In them he kept his groceries, his food, the hundred and one little things he needed. He himself was a figure picturesque enough with the silk hat which he never took from his head during my visit, one that could never by the remotest possibility have fitted him; with a dress coat and riding breeches, and knee boots. He had a spade-shaped red beard and red hair; and something in his manner suggested chronic suspicion. Almost he seemed impatient of us as visitors. At any rate, he did not invite us to enter, but curtly asked us, in French, what our business was, and Domange replied, quite as curtly with the one word, "Books."

The man frowned at us in a mood of defensive reserve.

"Books!" he said, and there was infinite scorn in the way he said it. "People don't want books these days. They want Zola." He spat and made a wry face. So I thought that we had hit upon the strangest bookman in the whole wide world. "Men go on printing books and nothing happens. People have learned to read only to fill themselves with *de ningún valor*."

He displayed no disposition to pursue the subject any further so I was all for leaving, but Domange sat unmoved. Mareschal, for that was the name of the man, filled and lit a large-bowled pipe, then puffed at it greedily. Presently he shot a question at me. "Did you ever hear of Harry Bailly?" he asked me, and by great good luck the name associated itself with Tabard Inn, and I said so.

He impressed me as being a disagreeable fellow. He grunted. He spat. He smoked furiously. Then came another question that threw me off my balance. "What woman has ever written anything worth while?" and after some reflection I remembered George Eliot.

"*Jamas mujer alguna ha salido del todo de la cuna*," he said almost angrily. "Can you turn that into English?" he asked.

I went at it lamely, saying that it was something about women never having quite got out of the cradle.

"Campoamor!" he exclaimed. "There was one who wrote out of experience, and that's the only way to write." And with that he sat down to talk about books. The spirit of the man, where books were concerned, was much the same spirit that I found in a man many years afterwards, one named Laukhuff, in Cleveland, Ohio. He was all for bookish excellence. For Mareschal had been a second-hand book seller in Paris, one filled with the opinion of the high accomplishments of certain authors, and he held that a wise and strong people could come only from those with a knowledge of literature. "I would not have people clamber over a pile of Zola and Paul de Kock and Dumas, to get at things worth while," he said. "I would have them ignore the rubbish and come to the jewels. But would they? No. They would not. The passion for self-improvement was not in them. . . ."

So he went on and on, telling how he had moved his books to Rio, then to Montevideo, then to Valparaiso, "But everywhere the mind of man runs shallow," he declared. The world, he said, did not want virtue, or wisdom, or happiness. It wanted amusement, and he had not been born to be a mere purveyor of amusement. So he had packed his books in boxes and there he was, and there were the boxes, a world of them.

It perplexed me then, and still perplexes me, that the exbook seller would not for a long time let me see his stock. We were entirely at cross purposes with the man refusing to let me look at what he had, and I fully determined to see. In the end there came a sort of compromise. He would not let me freely handle his books, but if I helped him to build a stockade next day, he could show me some of them. And so it was. Yet at the last he set up quite a number of trivial objections. It would be a hard matter to draw the nails from the packing-case tops without injuring the wood. Books once packed in a certain way could not be repacked properly. A book improperly opened would be soiled. He did not know where the hammer was. But at last all of his objections were met and overcome, and the strange fellow stood by an open case and revealed his treasures, or at least the top layers of some of them. What lay beyond I never came to know. When I urged exploration he shook his head and asked, "How could anyone ever get them back again?" Most annoying was the fact that he insisted upon making little dissertations about the book in hand, and at discovery of some particular passage or literary gem thrusting it out of sight in some corner, or into one of those high hats, which seemed to me to be of nightmare numerousness.

"Look at this treasure," he said, taking out two small, leather-bound, gilt-backed books.

"Well!" said I, in simulated astonishment and pleasure, putting forth my hand to take them. He pretended not to see my gesture and opened them himself and showed them to me as one might show something delicate to a clumsy-handed child.

"No name of author on title page, you see," he told me, displayed a yellow page, rubricated. "First edition. It was Dennis Vairasse. No. Not edition the first! Let me see, Paris, 1677. That was the first. This is a D'Estienne Roger of Amsterdam. *Histoire des Sevarambes. 'Peuples qui Habitent une Partie du troisième Continent, communément La Terre Australe.'* . . . Excellent. Most excellent."

He let me see strange pictures, as of an Australian philosopher studying a book under a tree, Australian aborigines in council in Grecian-looking buildings, other aborigines in togas witnessing a suttee. Then he fell to reading here and there, with that avidity belonging to the enthusiast.

"You were saying," I hazarded, to recall him.

"That reminds me. I have an old catalogue. I remember packing it away. It's almost a coincidence." Then he picked up and laid down books, turned leaves, found a place and said, "Listen. I will read. It is a catalogue of published music sold by Roger of Amsterdam, and Ribboteau at Londres. It has this. I remember seeing it years ago and being struck by the name. And now you come and I am reminded. Item 234. You see, I remember by the way the numbers run. I have a fine memory. '*Huit sonates à trois instruments, dont il y en a six de Mr. Williams, trois à deux violons & une basse & trois à deux flutes & une basse avec deux de Mr. Finger.*' Now, what about that? Here you have it again. 'Finger opera seconda.' 'Godfrey Finger opera prima.' 'Godfrey Finger opera Prima XII.' Concert master to King James the Second, this Finger was. Could he be any relation? Has his musical ability gone through the ages to touch you? Are you musical? There is a piano in Punta Arenas if you can play that instrument."

It seemed obvious that he was drawing a red herring across my trail to get my attention from the books.

"I never was curious about my ancestry," I told him. "I want to buy some of your books."

"Then you shall. You shall. I shall sell you to the value of ten sovereigns. You shall give me an order on Domange. You shall take the books with you. But also you must have those books I pick out for you and none others. Is it agreed? That or nothing."

Thus came my further interest in the literature of rascality, for Mareschal let me have the histories of Cartouche, and of several truculent German outlaws, and Smith's *Highwaymen.* He let me have a scrapbook about Australian Bushrangers. After hesitation he added a copy of *Purchas his Pilgrims,* because, he told me, some leaves were missing; Bacon's *Nova Atlantis;* two copies of Marco Polo, he made me take both though they were duplicates; a paper-back novel by George Manville Fenn, entitled *Eve at the Wheel;* a copy of *Du Grand*

Gargantua, Père de Pantagruel; a *Pâtissier François*, though I had to grin to think of myself on my island with a pastry-cook's manual; *Moral Maxims and Reflections* of the Duke of Rochefoucauld, in French, finely bound; a book on architecture; *Phiokilographia*, or *Admirable Specimens of Penmanship*, by one W. Jones; Lesage's *Le Diable Boiteux;* Richardson's *New Designs of Vases and Tripods;* Kentfield on *Billiards Scientifically Explained;* Meyrick's *Critical Inquiry into Ancient Armor as It Existed in Europe.* I regarded them and thought of those speculations and arguments among the literary minded about the books a man would take to an uninhabited island.

There were other books of closer interest, but I remember those particularly, and pondered about them as I sailed alone back to my island. I wished they had been different because penmanship and ancient armor, and billiards, and the cooking of pastry, and architecture, though well enough in the proper place, left me indifferent being considered as island reading. But then Master Mareschal had insisted with dry insolence that I take them or get nothing. And at the time of the trading I would have lost the Paston letters had I not taken the pastry-cook book. The book on billiards too had been offered with Bret Harte and Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* in French. My objections to the book on *Vases and Tripods* he had set aside as unreasonable and unjustifiable because it went with a lot that included Holmes's *Autocrat*, and a Globe edition of Shakespeare, and *Gil Blas.* But he was strong on French philosophers and chose for me volumes of Helvetius, Malebranche, Renan, Amiel and Volney. I wanted Verne, having caught sight of his *Star of the South*, but he objected and looked at me as if I had been guilty of an offence against the truth. And because of that indiscretion of mine I lost all hope of getting Disraeli's *Curiosities of Literature*, which he had been on the point of handing me. After that I learned to hide my feelings and desires. But I made secret resolutions to burglarize his premises some day. And much I regretted the honesty that prevented me from doing so, for before I left my island the flimsy house that held Mareschal's books went up in smoke, so all his treasures turned to ashes.

4

On the third month of my stay on the island came the funny adventure of the Lady and the Prince, and I wish I could give names, but cannot because of possible consequences. So it must be accepted with unproved data as must much more of the latter part of this book. Let it be sufficient when I say that the woman was an authoress, that she was a most outrageous liar, that she was witty, vivacious, subtle and full of enthusiasm. As for the prince, accept him as belonging to a notable German family with a certain pomposity about him that made me dislike him from the start. And the story itself I shall copy from a letter that I wrote to a school friend, which he recently sent to me. I think it holds close to truth. If I rewrote it I would add here and soften there.

". . . . I was riding, one day [it runs in part], and came to what I have called Drake's hill, and there saw as pretty a yacht as ever I hope to see. Brass and glass and paint there were. Sailors in uniform. A dinghy lowered. And the boat started ashore so I rode down to meet the people, glad to see new faces. When they came near, a woman stood up, and she looked finely slim and erect. She was dressed in a sailor coat trimmed with gold braid, altogether a dramatic kind of creature. Then there was this prince. Very lofty of manner, very symmetrical, very splendid as to mustache and uniform. I dismounted and walked down to the water's edge and said 'How d'ye do?' The lady, she was a Lady with a capital L, and the name of a place after it, turned out to be genial and was the first to step ashore. The men in the boat made way for her. 'What a romantic place,' she said, though there was nothing there but beach and barranco, and me and the horse, and my dog Tom. She was one of those determined to admire.

"'Are there people here?' she asked.

"'I'm the only one,' I said.

"'A Crusoe!' she said, and laughed. 'A real Crusoe.'

"By that time the prince had joined her, a towering fellow of six foot one or so, and he looked about and made a good many 'Hms!' in his throat, but did not address me just then.

"'Isn't this island historical about something?' she asked. 'I must put it in my book. Tell me something.'

"I told her about Magellan staying here, and Drake, and Cavendish and all that, then what must she do but break off and cry out that she was sure there was a penguin. And of course there were as always no end of them. So I went and picked up one of them—they were about twenty paces away—and brought it to her to look at.

"'Why, I always imagined them to be about five feet high,' she said. 'As high as a man.' So it struck me that she somewhat lacked power of observation, or at any rate had not the right perspective. Then the prince broke in with this, said very loftily:

"'Ha! My man!'

"That put my back up so to speak. There he was towering, standing erect like a soldier under inspection, stiff and straight. He flourished one gloved hand, theatrically it seemed to me.

"'Ha! My man! We want to engage a guide to take us into Patagonia. We shall want horses. An entourage. That is, servants.'

"All that while the lady was trying to feed the penguin with a piece of cake.

"Well, the prince's manner ruffled me considerably. It brought back to mind all kinds of things that had nearly faded, domineering fellows, lords of creation, heirs of the ages and all that. You understand, he assumed that I was ready for hire, like a livery hack, or a rowboat, or something of the kind. I might have told him to go to the devil, but I didn't. For one thing I planned an excursion as a change from the island life. For a second I liked the woman and liked to hear her talk, and enjoyed her ways, and found myself amused at her lies.

"The long and the short of it was that I agreed to be their guide, rode about the island and saw all was shipshape, then went on board the *Queen of the Spray* as pilot and guide and general manager of the expedition. And I enjoyed every hour, every sight, every conversation on board. I took them through the Second Narrows and to San Diego Bay, where we dropped anchor. Then I went ashore and crossed the ridge and so came to Petaluga's shanty where I knew I could get horses. When I explained things to him, he wanted to go along too; and he did. But we took with us four of the worst beasts, for the prince's use. Pile drivers they were. Every step they took they came down with a bump. There are horses like that, beasts which can never be brought to anything but clumsy service.

"But the prince deserved everything. No sooner had we brought the horses to him, than there he was, telling us how the cavalry did in Sharmany, and how men were trained to do this and that and the other. Well, our party included Petaluga, the prince and the lady, and a young fellow who was an artist, besides myself. And the prince got the clumsiest horse in the troop, a humped, bumped, armored thing, he must have thought it. The first day we shot a huanaco, and there is such a thing as a loin steak that can be cooked on a quick fire and [makes] tender eating if you cut out the loin meat. But the flank end, may the Lord preserve us from that! It was the flank end that fell to the prince. And when we stopped to camp the fellow could hardly stand in his shining riding boots. We camped half a mile from Boston Tom's shanty but not in sight of it. For we were to let the prince see wild Patagonia. And he did see it. Four days and four nights we guided them here and there, fording the Gallegos, always camping out of sight of shanties, always giving the prince pile drivers to ride, always letting the poor fellow sharpen his teeth on the leathery end of steaks.

"And did we break down his dignity? We did not. He was absorbed in his own greatness at the end of the tour as at the beginning. There was indignation and plenty of it. He pronounced opinions on things in general. The fantastic thing is that he never once came to suspect that we had put things over on him. He just endured hardships and that was all there was to it. As he saw it the woman and the artist endured equal hardships because he never thought that the horses they rode were easier, or the steaks they had were more tender. There isn't any moral to it all. But I think I got a point of view of which I was before ignorant. We were talking one night about evolution, and the artist was trying to explain it to Petaluga, who never bothered his head about things like that. The artist had said that apes and men had branched off from the same stem.

Petaluga got the idea, because he asked whether evolution had ceased. 'Has this here branchin' stopped?' was the way he put it. 'Not at all,' said the prince. 'It still pushes itself. There are superior men and inferior men. Men have divided from men as the apes and men are divided.'

"You see what I mean. The fellow had the self-conscious-superior notion. That 'My man' of his which made me so damnably mad was no pose. Literally he considered us as 'his men.' He was of the important threads in the social fabric. He was dead sure of that. And it's queer and more than queer that presently there were prince and my lady begging for Petaluga's door mat and duster and door stop. It was this way. Getting back to our starting point we took in Petaluga's shanty as the last camping place, partly because we came on that side of the ridge whereas on the outward trip we had been in the valley paralleling Petaluga's, and partly because it was a rainy night and we were hungry and getting a bit weary of one another. Well, after we had eaten and were poking about, suddenly my lady discovered that Petaluga had a sealskin for a door mat, and a bunch of ostrich feathers which he used to clean his table with, and a stone ax for a door stop. So nothing would do but the prince and my lady must have them at any price. Petaluga made a pretty good trade too. And so ends the adventure of the royal trip in Patagonia. They saw mighty little —a few ostriches, a few huanacos, a fox or two. But they heard a good deal from Petaluga, and something from me, and down it all went in the notebook for future use. Beware, my dear H.S., of books of travel. They did not see a single Indian, but we told them how they looked, and how they were dressed, and how they stood on their horses, and the artist made some good imaginative sketches.

"And there is this. We had grown pretty friendly, the lady and I, and on board the *Queen of the Spray* she let me see some of the stuff they had gathered up. But Lord! the fakes and humbugs they had. And each with its story, mind you. As though real, bona-fide travelers could burden themselves with junk! You simply can't do it. I've found, at different times while going about, old Spanish swords, a helmet, queer bones, beautiful arrowheads, old pistols, a telescope that was a dandy. But did I carry them? I did not. Sometimes I made the attempt, but then something else not at all necessary came up and away went the curiosity.

"So there are the people of the *Queen of the Spray* going to enlighten a darkened world, carrying home stuff that means nothing and is supposed to reveal methods of life in the wilds. Does it reveal? It does not. Put the matter this way. If a Patagonian went to Ireland and collected for his people's benefit a few things, what would it show of Irish life? Say he took back a piece of linen, a lump of coal, some costumes he bought at a theatrical supply house, a box of odds and ends bought in curiosity shops in Dublin, a piece of rock chipped from the Giant's Causeway, a picture of Parnell and some stock caricatures of Irishmen—then what would he have? What would his people know of Ireland? What erroneous conceptions would they have?

"Let me tell you something. If you want to know about Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, then read Darwin's *Voyage of the 'Beagle.'* Darwin saw more in a day than any of us can see in a year, in ten years. He had eyes, enthusiasm, the gift of description and a passion for truth. Some of us have one of those, some two, a few three, mighty few all. On top of them all he had refinement of thought and behavior. Thinking of Darwin I come nigh to believing somewhat in the prince's theory of bifurcation of mankind, but intellectually. If ever I write I hope it will be in a way that my reader is brought into contact with a personality, as I feel when reading Darwin.

"I earned nearly a hundred pounds as guide. . . .

"But here's the devil of it. There was I, damning the self-consciously superior fellow because I was self-consciously superior, *n'est ce pas?* (Don't complain about a long letter. Solitude on an island brings a flooding of the mind with ideas, and one has time.) But here's the point. If the prince was a priggish-minded fool, so then was I. But we approached priggishness by different routes, that was all. He was going to rule me, and I intended to punish and rule him. We were both going to exercise influence. We were both going to shove our own tastes into the other fellow. His case and my case were exactly parallel, only we called our cases by different names.

"But mark what came of it. Just about the time we were getting ready for shearing, and I could either stay on the island or take a trip and leave the place to Domange until shearing time had ended, an Argentine gunboat anchored off my island, and the officer who came ashore wanted me as a proper man to guide an ornithological expedition of French and Russians into Tierra del Fuego. I saw the letter he had written to a M. Despreaux and blushed to find myself described as 'a man of energy' as 'peaceful-minded' as 'courteous' and 'not given to petulance at trifles.' He wound up by saying 'I heartily recommend this young man, secure in the belief that he will act honestly and faithfully with all his superiors, giving them perfect service and satisfaction.' So there you are. Coals of fire, and good returned for evil, and all that kind of thing. And I, all the time, looking upon myself as unkind to the point of inhumanity.

"Well to cut a long story short, one which I hope to tell with all its intricacies some day, for the first time in a long while, I have a little money saved because there was no way to spend it.

"I did guide the expedition. We were, it turned out, to go south, and to meet somewhere, they were not sure where, another party that would start at Useless Bay and work eastward under the guidance of a man named O'Neill. And because of the sealskin door mat and ostrich-feather table duster, and one thing and another, this party of mine was going to take horses, and men, and the Lord knew what not, so as to be able to carry away much treasure.

"We started from Anegada Point one fine day in December, thirty horses and six scientific-minded gentlemen who were full of a new superiority, that of pompous knowledge. Oh! the multitude of superiorities in the world. They were very solemn. They were very dreary. They were very dull. And they were very impressive indeed when they talked. The game seemed to be to hit upon the Latin name for a thing seen. On the first day, I remember, one of the professors was riding by my side, giving me a long dissertation on the cause of the ice age. He took it for granted that I was ignorant as a jacksnipe. One of the dogs, we had a half dozen, turned up a fox, it ran quite close for some reason, a rare thing for a fox to do.

"'It must be *Canis Azaræ*,' was what the professor said. So they began to argue whether it was that or *Canis Magellanicus*. When we saw a fly-catcher, one of them told all the rest that it was *Mylobius albiceps*. I certainly would not remember those names had not one of the scientists written them down for me. He talked to me with a condescending air.

"You understand. These fellows were just saying the names of things. It was no expedition at all, but really an opportunity for them to show that they could tag things. And it was no expedition because of all that noise and commotion that so large a party must necessarily make. To see things a man must be alone. There we were with all that mob of horses and dogs, with the Argentine handy-men, driving away all the timid wild creatures in the place. I used to turn out early, to make my coffee, and the whole country would be a chorus of singing and whistling and chirping and twittering. An hour later the rest of them would come alive, bawling and pounding and yelling, and they'd wonder at the poverty of the bird life. One day, what should happen but that I went over the hills a little way, alone, and there in the vega were four Indians of the Ooan tribe. I looked down at them and they looked up at me, then they vanished, as they know how to do, but of course, saw me all the time. Presently one of them stood up and then came running, and who should it be but my old friend Thomas Carlyle. He began jabbering at once, mixing up his stupidity and sound digestion, badly blurred (you remember I wrote about that), and some of the Scott's 'Lady of the Lake,' as light-hearted as you could wish to find a man. Then he understood me when I told him to bring up his three friends, and did so. So we went to the camp, the five of us, for I wanted to give them some sugar and stuff, which I did. So my scientists got a good view of the native, and when it came to physique, let me tell you the native had all the best of it. Also he had the best of it when it came to making a living at first hand. That need hardly be said.

"What puzzles me is this. There in Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego are a people in the making. What would have come of their race if it had been left alone? That's what I ask. What kind of an individualistic system would have evolved? Why shouldn't we believe that they too are struggling upward? Yet there were my scientists looking on my Indians with vague pity; and there were the Indians looking on the scientists with something pretty much like contempt. In the case of the native there was all that fine indifference to many things in the way of weather and climate that sent the white men to cover themselves with a bundle of clothes, and the clothes hampered free movement. So there came a loss of athleticism. In the case of the white man there was contempt because the natives did not cover themselves. The white man's helplessness in that land was complete. Had I deserted my scientists they must have perished, because not one of them knew anything at first hand. They could not hunt nor dress meat had it been killed for them, nor cook without utensils, nor know the things to kill. So Thomas Carlyle regarded them with undisguised contempt. Yet the scientists are of the race that looks upon the destruction of natives as right and proper, as a survival of the fit. If the survival of the fit means the winning of a fight between individual type and individual type, it also means the fight of type against adverse conditions of climate and weather and natural adversity. In the latter case honors may be said to be even as between whites compared with natives. One has won by learning the use of things. The second has won by sheer accommodation to environment. But which of the two types would survive if the temperature of the whole world dropped twenty degrees below normal and stayed there for any length of time? I am inclined to think that out of such a new glacial period it would be the Tierra del Fuegan type that would come out strong. . . . However, the doctrine of the survival must also mean the struggle of society against society, with force as the deciding factor. So victory must rest with the mischievous little devils that handle machinery, as victory rested when Cortes and Pizarro destroyed societies that were much superior to the civilization they left in the decimated and outraged lands.

"Well, cutting across things, I took my party down south, met the O'Neill crowd, got a clearance from my scientists and also a signed order for my wages on the vice-consul, then joined with Thomas Carlyle and his party and went north again until I reached Porvenir, where I hung around for ten days, then took passage in a three-masted schooner, for La Colonia. . . ."

I give that letter without revision as revelatory of me at the time. And I am glad to have it for it brings me up sharply to a closer realization of myself as I was.

5

The three-masted schooner was called the *Martha Gale*, and I boarded her late at night, after shouting myself hoarse on the beach for almost two hours, while the rain fell in torrents. But the sailors on the boat were silent to the point of sullenness, having been roused out to go ashore, and all I could get in the way of promise to take me to the Colony was a word that I might bunk down in the fo'c'sle. The captain would never let himself be aroused from sleep and questioned about accommodation aft. Also they would swing out at sun-up.

The fo'c'sle was over-heated, and the air of it mysterious with a thousand queer odors, and two men snored tremendously, but I stretched myself out on an empty bunk, heaved a restful sigh and fell asleep. When I woke it was long past morning coffee and I went on deck to make friends in the galley, but the cook would not entertain the suggestion of doing anything out of the way because the captain was a disciplinarian. I had a Norwegian to deal with, he told me, and Norwegians were sea-kings and no mistake about it. So I took a look at the skipper and there was a Viking, bearded gold and silver, with deep-set eyes under shaggy eyebrows, a craggy kind of man who had the look of facing storms as a promontory would. We were bowling along under a fresh breeze, with every sail swelling and the ship rising and falling in the joyful way of well-handled craft. So I was instantly jealous of the man at the wheel because of a job he could do with zest and enjoyment. He was a clean-cut figure of a young fellow, in sea boots and black jersey and knitted cap. His face was ruddy and his eyes were bright, his movements easy and graceful. As I looked at him, while I stood by the foremast, there came up on the deck, out of the captain's cabin, a girl. If ever the spirit of the sea hung about the creature it hung about her. She gave a look aloft, she looked at the fast-disappearing headland, she looked at the binnacle and noted the course, then she glanced over the side at the swift-running water, and, satisfied with the rate of speed, went across the deck and stood, lightly balancing to the swaying motion, by the wheel. There were details I noticed. She wore a close-fitting blue jacket but no hat, and her hair was black and shining. Over her shoulders she wore one of those filmy woolen clouds called Iceland scarves. It made a white cross at her breast and the rest of it swung behind her waist, loosely knotted. That her heart was in tune with the sea and sky and wind could not be doubted. The flashing smile and tanned face and the perfect self-possession and poise of her told that.

For me the scene became perfect when she said something to the man at the wheel, whereupon he surrendered it and she took his place. I had to go nearer, to the mainmast, then to the lifeboat that stood between the main and mizzen. There I could see the top half of her over the cabin hatch, a Viking princess who held her head high, and who said things to the deposed helmsman or to the captain in a clear, enthusiastic voice, and a wisp of whose dark hair suddenly tossed loose, then whipped like a pennant. There was a divine quality in her ease, I thought, as she brushed the lock of hair into place and held the wheel steady with the other hand. I looked over at the wake, expecting to see a telltale curve in the foaming lane of water, but it ran straight as a die.

So I fell to watching the waves, and the gulls, and the cloud shadows on the sea; and as I watched I wondered, as we all wonder, if life had any purpose or whether it was all enigma. And why was I, like a spendthrift, throwing away my years? This slim thing of a girl steering a straight course with consummate skill would laugh at my bungling steering of my life's ship. . . . I began to think of poetry. Then a passing man, carrying a tray with covered dishes, told me that I would eat aft at the captain's table, being a passenger wrongfully in the fo'c'sle. I imagined table conversation, the captain's daughter somewhat disdainful.

But it turned out that there were two tables, and I sat with the second mate, the captain and his daughter and the first mate having ended their meal. The second mate proved to be solitary rather than social. Once during the meal the girl came through the little saloon and nodded, smiling, to the second, then went into her room.

"I noticed how she handled the wheel," I said.

He grunted affirmatively.

"Probably brought up on the water," I hazarded.

He lifted the dish covers and forked out this and that.

"Does she live on board?" I asked.

"Damned impertinent question," he answered.

I occupied myself with my plate to cover furious blushes. It seemed clear that my table companion held me in small regard. The rest of the meal passed in studied silence. Before the second mate went he jerked his head in the direction of the cabin door. "She's miles above anyone anywhere south of the Line," he said.

CHAPTER II

The Narrow Horizon

I

If I were called upon for documentary proof of much that follows, the records I could offer would be very unsatisfactory because the salient diary pages have been torn out comparatively recently. The fact is I sent them, not so long ago, to the captain's daughter, though many years had elapsed in which I had not heard from her nor she from me. But one day she chanced to be in Oslo, and, going to buy books, found one, a novel called *A Touch of Earth*, written by Lella Warren. Turning the pages she happened to light upon a passage on page 255, which arrested her attention. It ran:

> He picked up a small periodical. "*All's Well?* How did you happen on this?" he asked her.
>
> "My father used to take *Reedy's Mirror*. So when this began to appear by one of his disciples . . ."
>
> "I see. Interesting man, this Charles Finger, with a robust enthusiasm for life. . . ."

So there was the thread. From Denmark she got a copy of *All's Well*, my hobby journal, and so followed a correspondence. In the course of it much of the past came to lie like a map outspread, much as you see the world from an airplane with hills and valleys in right relation, and ridges that to the man on foot had looked tremendous were properly dwarfed. I sent her the diary pages, also poems I had attempted under emotional stress, also pen sketches that I had drawn at the time. As our correspondence developed I told her of the affair of Andrew Lang at Buenos Aires, which was not in the diary, and which incident took place after she had left South America. And, by all legal standards, Lang was the innocent man and the truth teller, I the deliberate and bad-tempered aggressor, because the remark that Lang made was entirely based on truth although it bore crooked construction. The adventure took place in Buenos Aires, in the smoking room of an exclusive club, at a function which comes to mind as a picture crowded with well-dressed, well-behaved men and women, for it was a dress affair. There were palms and music, and dancing, and much else that was picturesque and significant of wealth. A fellow of my own age named Molesworth I had met by chance, and that afternoon we had driven about in a well-appointed barouche, my captain's daughter happy and bright-eyed at sight of gardens in colors softly harmonious as those of a Persian rug. So there were pleasant hours of parting, and the last memory I have of Agnes is on the steamer's deck when we stood, she with both hands on my shoulders and I with my hands lightly cupping her elbows, and my eyes meeting her straight, steady gaze. We parted with mutual assurances.

Because of the sorrow of the parting, I entered into Molesworth's plans, which he developed a few hours later, with interest. It offered relief, and he presented it between whiles during a running discourse on religion. He had some high and splendid notions that we should go to Mecca and Medina, not as Burton did, but as non-Moslems, explaining ourselves to sultans and potentates. We discussed it all through supper, and afterwards in the smoking room of the hotel where a special event of some sort was in progress. My eye took in things as I listened: the well-lighted ballroom and its cheerful company, red leather chairs, the oak panels so finely carved; the illuminated garden beyond the glass doors where men, and women gracefully dressed, promenaded between dances; the musicians in the gallery. Seen as reflected in a mirror, Molesworth and I had faces tanned to deep mahogany, and the effect was enhanced because of the white expanse of our shirt fronts. While we talked and sipped wine, Andrew Lang, accompanied by some diplomatic service man who wore a scarlet silk band across his short front, came near, and Molesworth greeted the diplomat, who was an acquaintance; so I made Lang and Molesworth known to each other. Two others, officers in uniform, joined us, and later a young man in sky-blue and silver. Lang, a man of handsome face and regular features, said little, but sat there taking in things, holding a long thin Brazilian cigar in his left hand and puffing it occasionally. After the usual persiflage of the smoking room Molesworth and the man with the scarlet decoration and I became close, especially when the ribboned man, referring to the possibility of an expedition into the Atacama Desert, hinted that it might be an excellent opportunity for Molesworth and for me. I welcomed all that because it lightened the dash of shadow and sorrow that was upon me, but I found myself annoyed when Lang, with that comfortably insolent way of his, gave glimpses and hints of Tierra del Fuego and San Sebastian. There seemed to be a cold, challenging light in his eye. His remarks affected me like flashes of lightning that foretell a storm. They aroused an alert watchfulness in me. I had the sense of a developing situation. The man who was interested in Atacama had a fineness about him, that and a number of exceptional qualities. He seemed to lay stress upon clean living as an indispensable part of success, and he also seemed to be paying Molesworth and me the compliment of taking us for men of clean character. He spoke of the advantages of a temperate way of living and all that kind of thing. But flitting about in the background of things was a shadow made by Lang, and that shadow seemed to imply a doubt. The shadow presently took on body and it became clear to the others that he and I had met down south, that there were rapscallions who were my friends down there, and the cumulative effect of his hints seemed to me to be dangerous. "There are men who adventure for spirit," he said, "and there are others, especially the human flotsam and jetsam I have known, who adventure for petty gain or because they have careers to hide." When he said that last I bit my lips.

During a pause in the conversation Lang asked Molesworth what he and I were doing in Buenos Aires, and Molesworth spoke of our day's adventure, and, almost incidentally, mentioned the fact that I had been bidding a lady friend good-bye.

Lang laughed softly and looked at his cigar ash. At the moment he had the collective ear of the party. "I remember that remarkable affair," he said. "I saw the lady in a *boliche* in La Colonia." I wanted to turn the talk then, but to have attempted anything of the kind would have made matters worse, so I sat silent but handled the wine decanter, a heavy cut-glass thing, to cover my annoyance. Lang had dropped into Spanish. "You, Señor Menendez, would have found it interesting, those *ouatchekai* drinkers, and *hombres malvados*, and women who were, well—not what would be called home-keeping——"

"One understands," said Menendez, absent-minded in a polite way.

"This woman turned out to have a gift for piano playing. Our friend"—he indicated me with a smile—"came in and it was strange to hear, in that place, a duet on the piano. I really enjoyed it; though of course——"

Now there must have seemed little cause for my sudden action. But as we talked, my armor of resistance grew thinner and thinner until it vanished. What I did must have looked like an act of sudden temper, but it was not. In my mind I was peaceful, even deliberate. I heard Lang talking as if from a great distance. The thought struck me that he was a devil that had come into my life to destroy all promise and possibility. No overpowering fit of passion made me hurl the decanter at Lang. I could have refrained from doing it. A sort of pride swept over me when I saw that my weapon had taken him on the chin so that he went over sideways. I saw him huddled up on the floor and felt very glad. Then things grew confused with someone leading me outside and past people polite and well-dressed who looked at me as they might have looked at a strange dog.

At the door a couple of *vigilantes* with swords took prisoner possession of me and we walked decently enough down the street in apparent harmony, so that onlookers might have taken the party to be a young man in evening dress being escorted to some conference. Then, striding hurriedly, came the man in sky-blue and silver, who called the *vigilantes* to him and beckoned me to go on. So that was the end of the affair, and the matter became one of those hushed-up things that happen in society everywhere. Its aftermath I have written of in a story, in the book called *In Lawless Lands*, frilling it extensively, though the main facts are true as given.

2

Yet as regards the outward aspect of things, truth, as I have said, lay entirely with Lang. The second time I saw the captain's daughter was certainly in a *boliche*, in La Colonia, and there were drunken rapscallions in the room, and the *boliche* was a miserable apology for a hotel. But in La Colonia drink was on sale everywhere. You would find a table with bottles at the butcher's, at the baker's, at the candlestick maker's. If you went to the clothing store, which was kept by an ex-lieutenant who had been under Captain Carey when Prince Louis Napoleon was killed by Zulus, there you would close the trade with a glass of whiskey. If you set foot in an eating place the man behind the counter would greet you with a bottle. If a steamer came in with mail, then we all rushed to the post office where we packed ourselves in a little room while the postmaster read aloud the names from the envelopes, giving them a Spanish twist that made one's own name strangely unfamiliar; and if we caught the name aright then we held up our hands and the letters were passed from one to the other; so what with hope and anxiety and expectancy the peripatetic wine dealer did a thriving trade on mail day in the post office. And if you did business with the registrar of horse brands, or with the blacksmith, or with the captain of the port, or if you bought or sold a horse, or if you paid your taxes, or if you paid a fine for misdemeanor, in each and every case you took a drink or gave a drink. Had there been a dentist or doctor in the place, one would doubtless have described symptoms after a social glass. But we had neither doctor nor dentist, and what surgery had to be done was done by the barber; while for ailments there were Epsom salts and blue poisonous-looking bottles of a sleep-inducing drug called chlorodyne.

However, to get back to the place before I looped in this story, that is, two days after I went ashore from the *Martha Gale*. I had been out to see the French book seller, and, having gained La Colonia went into the only hotel in the place. It was night, and the sight of four saddled horses told a tale of men of the camp. So I went into a barroom where a man in his shirt sleeves, very dirty ones, hailed me with a Portuguese accent, and while I swallowed some of the stuff I heard the notes of singing in another room. Noting my interest, the man behind the bar invited me to walk into the parlor. When I threw open the door the feel of the air struck my face like the blast from an oven, tobacco smoke laden atmosphere, the reek of beer, the heat from oil lamps and a cherry red stove. Somewhere a Scot was singing "Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon," and singing very loud and in good voice. When my eyes grew accustomed to the fog I recognized my Tierra del Fuego man, Andrew Lang. A young woman, the daughter of the hotel keeper, sat by his side and his left arm encircled her waist. She was dressed in something almost a caricature of the prevailing style of Paris, bustle, sleeves high at the shoulders, shoes with painted toes, curled hair tightly flattened, luxuriantly padded at the breast. She was tall and bony and had a face like a horse. There were about a dozen men in the room, and the hotel mistress saw to it that the trade in drinks held what industrial-minded people would call a gilt-edged strength. But the center of things for me was the captain's daughter whose presence in the town took me all aback, because I knew that the *Martha Gale* had sailed for Valparaiso. She stood by the piano—it was the only piano in town—a girl superior, a girl scornful, a girl interested and astonished. She was aloof and quite untouched by the jarring things around her. This daughter of the Vikings with her golden-tinted skin and her clear-seeing eyes stood apart as might have one whose venturesome spirit had led her into strange lands and among strange peoples. When a man, in clumsy gallantry, stood up and laid a hand on her arm, she flamed in sudden anger then lifted her chin and said that she preferred to remain standing. I noticed then some music on the piano, good music, and I understood how things were, and how, as was the case in that town, the crowd had entered in a body, for it was a habit of people to go in knots from one drink place to another. They had invaded

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the room at the moment she was playing for her own amusement, attracted by the sound of music. The inexplicable invasion had held her curious, and she saw that their musical offerings were in the nature of a compliment; so also were the orders for drink. But it was a sense of business that permeated the hostess when she assured the Viking's daughter that the custom of the country demanded that she should stay. "Look at my daughters!" she had said. "They stay. And they are well-behaved girls."

Presently Lang suggested piano music. He was very persistent in a polished way, but to no avail. Then my eye caught sight of a duet among the music, it was an arrangement of Mozart's Symphony in E flat. So I suggested that, and there was a suspicion of clear-eyed amusement when she told me that it was a duet. In halting English she explained that it took two players. And then I said that I would play with her.

"Do you really play?" she began, and altered it to "Which part do you play?"

"Either," I answered.

It must be remembered that I was long-haired and wild-looking in corduroys, with a youth's curly whiskers, and a face the color of mahogany, and boots that encased my legs to the thigh, and spurs, but I had no thought of the incongruity of my appearance as coupled with my ambition. Yet we sat down, took heart, attacked the symphony and by the time we had reached the minuet were on a basis of perfect understanding with the audience forgotten.

So that was the beginning, and while I know that it is the fashion to pretend to tremendous Don Juanism and something akin to cause for shame to confess clean relations between sexes, yet it is the truth and nothing but the truth that in my very active life I had felt no desire for the company of women. Also during those months when the daughter of the Vikings and I met, and sailed, and rode and walked, in a land where there was neither law nor convention, nothing bedraggled or shameful ever lay between us. We were golden lovers with plenty of common sense where our own conduct was concerned, but with a vast lack of common sense where our dollar-and-cents welfare came into play. When my island duties called me and I had to bid her good-bye, the farewell words, many of them, were said as we strode side by side along the sea beach. But I would have none of that hotel, nor would she. So having found a one-room house that stood apart from the house of a Chilean forester, we furnished it and I found much joy in working with saw and hammer. My dream was a home on the island, and I had visions of riding home, to be greeted by my Calypso, who would meet me with a welcoming smile, and there would be evenings spent in walking about flowery solitudes.

"And how long, Carl," she asked, "would those adventures of mind and soul endure?" We talked for the most part in French.

When I said "Forever," she shook her head and told me that I was a romanticist and she a realist. "A selfishness of two can no more last than a selfishness of one," she said.

Looking back it seems like a year of perplexity with my sailing back and forth from my island, with days of emotion when she and I climbed the mountain behind La Colonia and sat on some fallen tree to plan and hope and to argue. It was quite settled between us that we were to marry, and my imaginings ran to a life of sailing and riding and seeing new horizons, but she pictured a life in Norway in which my activities were specified. There were times when her Viking father sailed into port and she went aboard, at which times our romance seemed on the verge of shattering because the stern old man held to a policy of serious purpose and I appeared to him as one shiftless and unreliable. Once, having sailed from the island to the port, having seen the *Martha Gale* headed west, and fitting things together, I arrived in La Colonia to find the little house empty and my Viking princess on board the schooner. But a gale from the northeast prevented going to the schooner which lay two miles out in the roads. I have a strong remembrance of the wild and picturesque look of things as I stood on the shore, the gray seas all white capped, the low-flying clouds, the Chilean who owned a boat telling me that no sane man would want to go out to sea on such a day. And I, my sanity and judgment gone, stood pondering over the misunderstandings and cross purposes that devastated the world. How magnificent life might be if she and I could set out bound for nowhere, facing conflicts to enjoy triumphs, enjoying the world ardently. For my horizon was love.

"I shall go aboard," I told the Chilean.

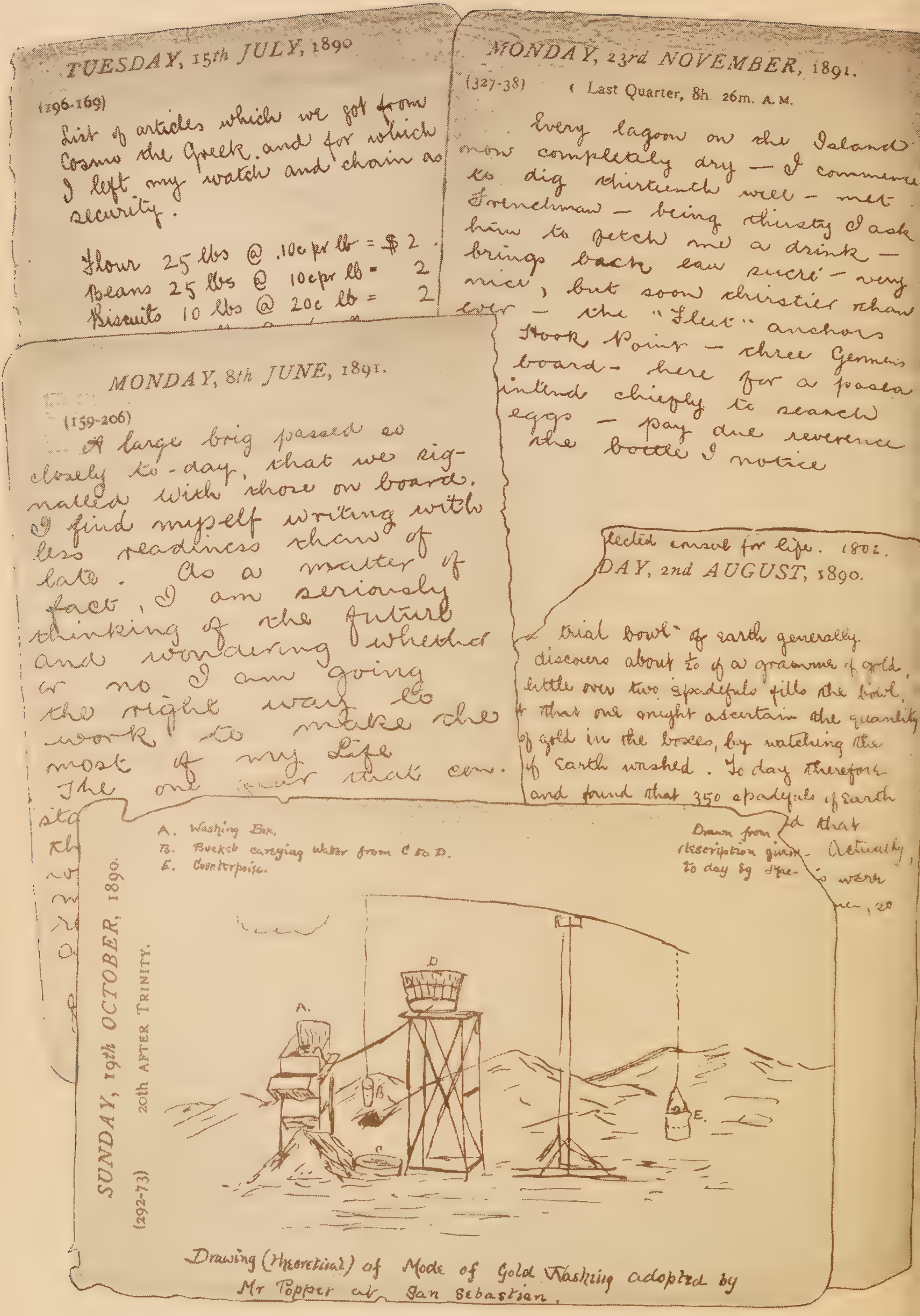
"It cannot be," he persisted. "I shall lose my boat."

"I shall buy your boat," I told him, and did buy it.

It took my breath, when once afloat, to see how swiftly the land slid away, how the mole shrunk to a black spot, how the sea boiled and chopped and reached white claws to the gunnel. The wind was much stronger than I had thought. It was not a majestic sea, but a mean and spiteful one, with far-reaching multitude of vindictive waves, each bent on mischief in a new way. All that I could do was to keep the boat's head true, trusting to hit the schooner by luck, for missing it I must be carried across the straits to land I knew not where. In the end I was blown under the bowsprit, my boat was lost forever, and I caught unhandily at a line that a sailor threw me and so clambered on deck. After all the storm ceased as suddenly as it had commenced and had I held my patience for an hour I might have gone on board with ease.

The Viking who had never entertained a good opinion of me was hospitality itself. We sat in his little saloon, the three of us, I at first full of gaiety but presently sobered, feeling that there was something I did not understand, something of which I was ignorant. Then it came to me with a shock what the estrangement meant.

"Are we to be separated?" I asked, and she told me that it was so. Then she came round the table and took a seat beside me and it would be something very much like a breach of confidence to relate all that we said, even if it mattered, or if it concerned anyone. The end of the scene was a parting much as I have written about it in the story called "Incongruity." But there was, actually, an added adventure, for I found myself burning to see her again, and when I found in the roads a Buenos Aires steamer from Valparaiso, north bound, nothing would do but that I must sail in her in the hope of arriving before the slower boat. And all fell out as planned, and I felt well repaid—we were together a whole long day—if only to see her hair fluttering in a fluting wind. So came the Lang affair and the onslaught with the decanter. But the fates did not weave our threads to run together and I never saw her again. For my eyes had lifted to a new horizon, the horizon of success.



TUESDAY, 15th JULY, 1890

(196-169)

List of articles which we got from Cosmo the Greek. and for which I left my watch and chain as security.

Flour 25 lbs @ .10c pr lb = $ 2
Beans 25 lbs @ 10c pr lb = 2
Biscuits 10 lbs @ 20c lb = 2

MONDAY, 23rd NOVEMBER, 1891.

(327-38) ☾ Last Quarter, 8h. 26m. A.M.

Every lagoon on the Island now completely dry — I commence to dig thirteenth well — met Frenchman — being thirsty I ask him to fetch me a drink — brings back eau sucré — very nice, but soon thirstier than ever — the "Fleet" anchors Hook Point — three Germans board — here for a pasea intend chiefly to search eggs — pay due reverence the bottle I notice

MONDAY, 8th JUNE, 1891.

(159-206)

A large brig passed so closely to-day, that we signalled with those on board. I find myself writing with less readiness than of late. As a matter of fact, I am seriously thinking of the future and wondering whether or no I am going the right way to work to make the most of my Life The one [illegible] that con-

sta
Kh

lected consul for life. 1802.

DAY, 2nd AUGUST, 1890.

trial bowl" of earth generally discovers about 1/20 of a gramme of gold. little over two spadefuls fills the bowl, that one might ascertain the quantity of gold in the boxes, by watching the of earth washed. To day therefore and found that 350 spadefuls of earth d that Actually, s were , 20

SUNDAY, 19th OCTOBER, 1890.
20th AFTER TRINITY.
(292-73)

A. Washing Box.
B. Bucket carrying water from C to D.
E. Counterpoise.

Drawn from description given to day by Spe-

Drawing (theoretical) of Mode of Gold Washing adopted by Mr Popper at San Sebastian.

SOME PAGES FROM MY ISLAND DIARY

BOOK V

The Strangle Hold

CHAPTER I

Touching Civilization

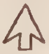
I

ONE evening I met a Scot, one of those who had expatriated himself and settled down for a lifetime. As is usual on such occasions each of us gave the other the tale of his experiences, not told in any lengthy and Conradian way, but sketchily, the salient points only touched upon. He considered awhile at the end of my story and then fell on me tooth and nail saying that I treated myself ill in that I ground and ground, but without grist in the mill. And ending he said, "He that is ill to himself will be good to naebody." That saying, so true as to be platitudinous, leaped at me and engaged me in vast speculation, the sum and substance of which was that I criticized myself because I felt no very present urge to become a cog in the world's machinery. Yet I knew that I had to be one sooner or later, not necessarily for the money that might accrue but because of a duty to become all that I might become. That the doing might mean submergence of self seemed to matter not at all. When, annoyed with the persistence of the thought, I tried to dismiss it, up started a Spanish saying to take its place, and it ran to the effect that a fool would do in the end what wise men did in the beginning. So I seemed urged to economic activity.

Presently there came one clear decision. I would have to turn to the making of a living in the ordinary way of men. I had marched to horizons to see other horizons. From the youthful horizon of respectability I had seen the horizon of altruism. From the horizon of altruism I had seen the far line of independence and of living for self. There had been the narrow horizon of love. Now I began to see distant heights, affairs of business, or economic activity. Yet to wrench myself out of all that freedom and into any kind of servitude seemed a huge task.

2

I pass over many silly adventures. Some of them have been told in stories written for magazines, some are in the book *In Lawless Lands*, some have been rejected by editors as unreal. The point is that none of them bore on my actions in sending me forth to new horizons. The agent doing that was a man with a wooden leg who had bought as his prop and stay and life investment a phonograph, one of the early machines, a glass-encased affair with wax cylinders for records, and with an arrangement of rubber tubes and ear stoppers by which the sound was transmitted. Happy with enthusiastic dreams he had set off on a world voyage. From New York he went to the British Isles, then to Gibraltar, on to points in Africa, across to Cuba; he swept lordly around the Caribbean Sea and down to Montevideo and at last found the straits country. He had started with a bare week's financial margin, but gradually adapted himself to changed circumstances, and not only travelled first class when I knew him, but tendered hospitalities. His repertoire numbered twelve cylindrical records, one of which was cracked, but as he charged a dollar for three tunes, and as six listeners could be accommodated at each "Act" as he termed it, and as the phonograph was a new thing at the points he touched, and as amusements other than barroom delights were limited, and money being easy because all men knew that they had earnings behind them, the man with the wooden leg had a business of gilt-edged strength. I rode with him from Cape Negro to Gallegos, going in no direct way, but from point to point taking in shearing gangs, gold digger camps, Indian encampments, receiving payment in kind, as doubtful written orders for money, pelts, gold dust, *capas*, even watches and knives and revolvers. The man's talk ran on great opportunities, some of them moral and some the reverse. He saw a great future should a man load a steamer with liquor then sail to outlandish places trading for what might be had. He predicted wealth for the man who would take a cargo of mixed stuff, clocks and toys and books and apple parers and a thousand and one things that people do not take to out-of-way places, selling or bartering as the market required. "It isn't necessities and it isn't luxuries what people go crazy about; it's something that lies between the two," he told me, with an air of confidential utterance. He often fell into the mood philosophical and discoursed at length upon life and its problems, once winding up a twenty-mile fantasia with "You got either to make up your mind you're going to get things, or you're going to be somebody and something. I'm going to get first and be afterwards. You been trying to be, and now you'd better start to get."

Then flying off at a tangent he burst out with, "This fellow Lumière now. Take him. I seen the thing at Paris." He went on to describe the moving picture, or sinmaytoograph as he pronounced the word, meaning, as I afterwards learned, the cinematograph. At first I had in mind the mechanical slides of the old-fashioned magic lantern, but he went on to tell of things in detail. "It's one of them inventions what's sprung up perfect, like some of 'em do, to get worse when them with money takes 'em in hand," he said, and when I saw Lumière's pictures, as I did, soon after, I found that he had told the truth. The man with the wooden leg did actually give me the one touch that propelled me to civilization. I burned to see the moving pictures though I had to go to France to do so. And I went. I sold my horses in Gallegos, with the exception of a mare that had a young foal, but she bore my brand, which was the arrowhead, shaped like this  but six inches in length.

As to that mare there is a story not to be omitted, because of the light it throws upon the honesty of men where they are not financially pinched. Years later, when I was in Mexico, I received a letter with a Peruvian postmark that had followed me from the Argentine to England, to New York, to Fort Worth; then to Montreal, and to the Rockies, and to Edmonton, and at last found me in Chihuahua. It contained a draft for money and ran thus:

This here is your money, I found your mare arrow marked and a good colt which I sold to Melato the Indian for two capas which I sold for ten pounds and send you the money with good luck hopping to come across you some of these days your true friend,

Jim.

3

Being in England again it was soon very manifest that most of the men I met had been getting on during those years, climbing into wealth and position. Their enthusiasm had burned with a steady flame self-fed, unlike mine that had blazed uncontrollably to die down unaccountably. But I seemed to become aware in myself of a masterfulness that had grown during those years. That again was offset in another direction. A certain richness strange to me appeared in the lives of the home-stayers because they were upheld and nourished by the culture about them. And I felt myself to be in unstable equilibrium, though that was balanced again by a serenity born of confidence, because I knew none of that economic fear sometimes called ambition, which had kept some of my former companions in a groove. A maddening groove it seemed to me, that getting up day after day and year after year at a certain hour, and daily dressing in a certain way, the daily ride in a train or bus with the same company, the daily paper and the swallowing of editorial opinions, the daily office routine, the lunch, the afternoon office, the ride home, and then the evening with man and wife yawning until bedtime. It seemed to me that they lost the worthwhile world being away from Nature and her harmonies. The effort of living merely to earn struck me as not being worth while. Almost everyone I met yearned to be something else, but smothered the yearning. Work took on the appearance of a doom. As for conversation—the ordinary conversation of the street and the places where men gathered—it reminded me of the buzzing hum of a million flies about a carcass, a mere making of noise. People seemed to be engaged in petty things. Yet they seemed to be able to cast the pettiness aside on occasion and rise to sublime heights.

But there were many stimulating conversations, not in any way logical, but pleasantly discursive. I had entered a thinking world in which men and women considered things seriously, and wondered, always wondered. Those of my generation seemed to have arrived at a profound conviction that they did not know anything at all about a path of social development, or about social relations in the deepest sense. They wondered and sought and pondered about higher obligations of family life, about education, about literature, about the criminal, about the world's misreading of history, about Christian ethics and competition. It seemed to me to be a generation peering ahead in search of a goal and a direction.

There were fine things that I found. I stood amazed one day at the vignette beauty of a mill pond somewhere in Surrey. The glory seemed too great with the mighty trees swaying in the breeze, the fleet of ducks and ducklings, the mild sky, the glint of blue on the horizon, the richness of color where a thatched and timbered farmhouse showed between elms. It was what Shakespeare called the "season of foison." I had been going about the countryside stopping at inns, enjoying bread and cheese and cider and beer, sometimes talking with villagers while seated at outdoor tables. Once a stout dame who kept an inn undertook to enlighten me who needed enlightenment on such things. She took me for a foreigner so pitched her voice high, and talked loudly, after telling me that she had a son in foreign parts. She pointed out that it was a time when the dog roses were at their best, and when the honeysuckle stood "as the glory of the country." She led me to a little patch of land where raspberries and strawberries bore full; and there were orange-tipped butterflies that came fluttering as we looked; and golden buttercups, and neat daisies lay thick in rich grass; and there were delphiniums, and tall larkspurs, with contented bees at work. That night I heard a nightingale and the music was sweet above human imaginings. Patagonia and its life became as unreal as a distracted vision of distressed sleep. This was a world of richness of hue and fragrance, the air sweet with the scent of mignonette and clover and rose. It was the only world of soft beauty, the only corner in the world where water lilies whispered in crystal pools, and where summer swallows darted to listen then carried away the secret of gentleness to men who lived in less kindly lands, where the secrets were heard in dreams.

But one does not leave the world to return and find the comfortable old niche as it used to be. Healthy natures cannot concern themselves in preserving niches, even in their hearts. Vacancies are filled, despite all the sorrowful poets in the world. So I must needs elbow myself into companionship, though I was received, it is true, with eager friendliness; yet there was the sense of elbowing where I would consort, where I had held a faint idea that I would return and be greeted and invited to fall into the general scheme of things. I saw I would have to school myself to surrender to the truth that friendship is a matter of propinquity and of cultivation just as, in after years, I had to school myself to the truth that children must mean much more to a parent than parents could ever mean to children. I also saw that while friendship might be a matter of propinquity, its endurance was strictly a matter of community of interests. Further, I saw that we cling with pathetic insistence to the fiction that we are indispensable because of some inherent quality we possess, whereas we are only indispensable where we supply a demand, and not always then. And in friendship as in everything else, we must make investment if we wish for returns. Also one of the intangible investments of friendship is the aggregate of joyful thoughts that come fleetingly and must be immediately shared. It is rare though not impossible that such bonds can be retained through correspondence. Dorothy Osbornes, with the gift for making the world love them, do not grow on bushes. A fine perception and an eye for experiences that count are not often married to the ability to translate them into words, except in children unspoiled by the world. Therefore friendships rarely endure to middle age.

4

On the steamer bound for New York I went among the steerage passengers. One young man among them had the matchless faculty and ability to amuse others. He scoured the ship high and low for talent with the idea of giving an entertainment or two, and, as he afterwards told me, with ulterior motives, for he had not the wherewithal to pass through the gates at Ellis Island. And although his entertainments were an artistic success in a small way, moderately successful too, financially, his abundant generosity offset and attained results. When we neared Fire Island he borrowed twenty-five dollars from me so that he could show the officials the unlikelihood of his becoming a public charge. That same Herbert Brenon's name presently hung over Broadway in white lights, and was flashed on a thousand screens as the director of *Neptune's Daughter*, and of a *Daughter of the Gods*, and of *The Lone Wolf*, and many other excellent productions. I see him as he was then, a brown-haired, bright-eyed man of tremendous energy and vision; full of active aspirations; full of a sense of adventure; a youth of dominant and dominating spirit.

Brenon and I walked about the theater district one day, and saw crowds that flocked to a Fourteenth Street cheap imitation of Barnum's early show. Another day we went to Coney Island and wondered at the childishness of the amusements. Near Columbus Circle we attended a roof garden entertainment. One day, in some down-town restaurant we fell into talk with a young enthusiast named Robert Bergman and the conversation turned on amusements. Bergman spoke with animation and intelligence about scenery, holding that many theatrical entertainments that might have been good were ridiculous not only because a stage star was too often supported by a poor caste, but because ridiculous and flimsy scenery that flapped and leaned and was altogether incongruous as well as clumsily designed and badly painted nullified best efforts and made artistry a laughing stock. "An average Broadway play is like a diamond in a tin stick pin stuck in a dirty shirt," said Bergman.

Brenon nodded agreement, but what filled him was the possibility of the moving picture's future. "This show at the Bijou now," he said. "Consider it. They are running at a failure, asking people to pay a quarter to see a new thing, and the public cares nothing for it. The time will come with this new art when the amusement seeking public will pass the drama and pay good dollars to see the motion pictures. The moving picture is a Cinderella and I'm going to be the prince to take her out of the kitchen into a palace."

It was Bergman's turn to nod. His imagination held fast to scenic effects. "I want to set up scenery that will kindle emotion. It ought to. I want to get homely comfort on the stage. I'm going to have smoke-blackened façades, and scenery that looks solid, and Wolsey parading through a Hampton Court that will not make him look like a giant among pigmies, and a parapet for Hamlet that will not look like some cardboard parlor game. I'm going to get dignity into scenery."

Bergman's eyes had the light of poetry in them.

The painting and designing of scenery had not entered into the scheme of things with me at all. It was something entirely marginal, almost negligible in connection with a play. But here was a young man for whom that unconsidered thing had tremendous importance. He wanted to lift it to the level of an art. He wanted to devote his life to it in no timid or spiritless way. He would go scene painting in the same adventurous spirit in which I might have gone a-sailing in a sloop among South Pacific Islands. "Give me ten years," he said, "and I'll have my work in every worth-while theater on Broadway."

"Give me ten years," said Brenon, "and I'll make people see something more than a toy in the moving pictures."

I began to see that in the world there were enthusiasms the existence of which I had never suspected. And if you have an eye for essentials in the amusement field, you may see what Brenon and Bergman have done, each in his field.

But the arts that I had learned in lands where men had to be self-sufficient served me not at all in New York. How should it matter to men that I could throw the bolas, or make bread, or catch fish bare-handed, or ride a horse, or cook meat on a stick fire more tastefully than could a hotel cook with his glittering stove and half a hundred adjuncts? Civilization wanted none of that artistry. And what civilization did seem to offer in the way of employment struck me as being likely to weaken the fiber of me.

For instance, one day I met a man in the Brevoort who told me of the vast wealth of someone who had made a popular song, and of the vaster wealth of the publisher who had thrust it upon a confiding world. When I told him that I considered the composition inane he retorted that musical advisers were a rarity, and spoke of a firm on Broadway that sought one at that very moment. So I rose up, and with loins girded and staff in hand, went to the place, dreaming on the way of concert pianos and worthy composers whose heaven-given melodies were rejected by ignorant men. But how amazed I was on finding the place to see a long queue of needy-looking young men in the street, and in the passage, and standing on the left of a stairway, and a hall, and another stairway, at least a hundred applicants for one job. As I passed them I caught here and there dull murmurs of complaint, of hardship, of neediness. I forgot that such a thing could be and fled the place with swiftness. It all brought visions of years before when ill-clad men fought at dock gates for a day's work.

I fled from New York, to Florida, to Cuba, to Galveston, and from there to the uttermost end of the Santa Fe Railroad in Tom Green County; after that I went south to Devils River where I worked on a sheep ranch for a time, then crossed into Mexico and back into Texas. For a little while I drove a stagecoach. I had thoughts of the sheep business, but the way of the sheepman in that state and the way of the sheepman in Argentine were poles asunder. Nor did the cowboy make as frank and pleasant a business of life as the Gaucho or the line rider. For in spite of busy romancers, the cowboy is not light-hearted, nor quick to see justice done, nor good-humored. I found him prosaic. Nor could I find any duplication of the old scenes of jollity and companionship in the saloons of the frontier. A settled dreariness pervaded places where I looked for enjoyment. Men drank without joy, and they gambled too earnestly. Once in the border town of San Angelo I spent a couple of days with Joaquin Miller, but not until the poet touched the further side of extreme mellowness did he reveal any signs of hearty and healthy nature. Otherwise he was full of intrusive anxiety, fearful lest people should fail to recognize in him the thundering, heaven-splitting, devil-may-care man of the frontier touched with divine afflatus. He was the frontiersman of the stage and talked of vanished days that never were. He wore long boots made in Paris by a man with Jules Vernish notions. He told me a tremendous tale of a snowstorm in Idaho when he walked around and around a party of men a whole night, one of them a deputy sheriff, Miller whipping them into ceaseless activity to prevent death by cold. He told how the prisoner and the law-officer had begged to be allowed to drop down and die; how Miller had killed and disemboweled the horses and made his party hide in the smoking carcasses. It sounded very well but did not carry conviction with it.

"You don't seem to believe it," said Joaquin.

"Well, I've lived in the Antarctic," I answered.

Miller looked at me steadily through watery eyes, took a drink, put a hand on my shoulder and brought his face within six inches of mine, breathed out a heavy aroma, then shook his head slowly. "Dress the part," he told me. "Dress the part as I do. Make a good show and honors'll be showered on you. You have advertising assets worth a million dollars but you don't use 'em."

When I told him about my first acquaintance with his poetry he dropped all that nonsense. The trivial fell away from him and I felt grateful for the change. I think he looked upon his early enthusiasms as among perished joys. An emotional fervor filled him that was good to see.

One day I found the amazing little village of Knickerbocker from out of which had come outlaws to the number of eight, including the Ketchem brothers, and Laura Bullion, and a most gentle-hearted rascal who had recently stepped out of jail after many years, wherefore it is well to say nothing in the way of identification to the end that the past may be left in veteran retirement.

But to forestall theorists who might talk about environment, I hasten to say that at the same little village I first met my ideal gentleman. If you choose to dub him a country doctor, well and good. Dr. Cornick's fine, honest dignity would suffer no diminution. I think that Plutarch must have had some such man in mind when he wrote of someone's "temperate way of living," of his "eloquent and persuasive address, his strict honor and fidelity, and the easiness of access to him on all occasions. No man was ever less importunate in asking favors, or more gracious in conferring them. He had . . . a princely air." If I seem to go to lengths in telling of a man about whom the world knows nothing, then I add that I do so because Texas of the wild-west romancer's days shows no such figure, and I have met many most modest and unassuming gentlemen on the border; outlaws and hard-cases did not monopolize the land. With such fine personalities, their armor was their gentleness, their courtesy their sword. They were not even remotely capable of taking unfair advantage. But I would search wild-west fiction in vain trying to find the type portrayed. Men of clean living, of quiet courage, of unselfishness, of kindness, of generosity and consideration are not popular in modern best sellers. As for women, the doctor's wife was the highest type the world can show; a creature of wide sympathies, with an abiding sense of justice, of breadth of view and sanity. And there were others in that village of Knickerbocker. I count some of them now so many years later, one nationally known expert on taxation, one a specialist in the diseases of children, one a banker in England, one an engineering expert, one woman a Lady Bountiful, another a social worker in Dallas, another an artist in tapestry. And out of the near-by village of Ballinger came David Guion, the composer. Again down in the Devils River country I fell among folk of heart and intellect. There was a Ferguson, a man of vast sympathies and a wholesome sense of humor, who should have been in some quiet flower garden instead of on the plains living a life for which he was entirely unfitted. There were relations of Washington Irving who had known noble enrichment of life on the Hudson; I always suspected that the lies of literary romancers had set them on the wrong trail. There was a cultured Englishman who had settled there in some mood of self-deception. To him a Mexican herder came carrying a little bottle found on the trail, saying he thought it might be poison.

"Nonsense," said the Englishman, pouring a little into the palm of his hand. "It's nothing but salt."

Saying that he dipped the end of his wetted finger in the stuff and tasted it, utterly discarding the thought of strychnine, and so passed into boundless night.

If Texas held anything for me, I knew it could be nothing in anyway approaching the old carefree life of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. It would be something altogether different. I pondered the starting of an Academy of Music. That idea grew out of an acquaintance formed with a violinist who, though he dropped into San Angelo from a freight train, had a fine taste in music. We played much together and I came to discover in myself a great hunger for music. The violinist deplored the lack of capital, but that gave me small concern. The years in the southland had filled me with vast self-confidence in myself. "I shall go away somewhere and get it if you hold on awhile," I told him.

That is why I went to Canada, first Montreal, then Ottawa; next in a great jump to Port Arthur where I met with a party of prospectors and with them went north in search of minerals. There was a kind of interlude when I paddled about the many lakes west of Fort William and north of Savannah, and joined for a while a party of lumberers. I turn the leaves of my diary to find a record of joyful weeks in pine woods, of hunting and fishing, of days when I canoed alone, of hearty French-Canadian companions who ate tremendously and laughed tremendously and enjoyed life to the full. And one day, being near Winnipeg, I heard the tale of construction work in the Rockies at Crow's Nest Pass, so that seemed the chance I sought to get into the economic machine that seemed to have no place for me. There was Edmonton, and an attempt to get to the Klondike by the overland route, and failure because of cold. Next I headed east and worked for a while on a fishing steamer that plied between Duluth and Fort William, until, with something of money in hand, I again made my way to Texas and one fine day my violinist and I started our School of Fine Arts.

It prospered beyond expectations, for we threw ourselves heartily into the work, found plentiful support, organized subsidiary activities such as elocutionary classes, singing, orchestra and all that kind of thing. And the crowning jewel of those activities was David Guion, though others too were the richer for our effort. The fundamental weakness in the field of music teaching was that people were not satisfied to have young ones learn to appreciate and to love music as a means of elevating and enriching life, but took it for granted that everyone should become a performer, which is, in effect, much as though one should learn to read not for private pleasure of reading and all that may grow out of that pleasure, but to the end that one might become an elocutionist.

In the midst of a certain measure of success there came upon me the old restlessness. I tried to combat it by bicycling south to San Antonio and to Laredo, north to New Mexico, but those trips were as drops of water to a thirsting dog. With my violinist friend and a singer, I made a restricted concert tour, but it whetted my appetite for further travel. I engaged with a stock-man, dressed in overalls, and took a trainload of sheep to Chicago, but the yearning remained. And, being again in Texas, one day I sat under a pecan tree with a pencil and paper because the idea of a story had come to mind. I wrote it, mailed it to *Youth's Companion* and in time received a check of twenty-five dollars and a pleasant letter from the editor asking me for more. So that was my first literary effort, but many years elapsed before I tried again, for between the time of the sending of the story and the receipt of the check I had joined forces with a friend, closed my music school, and had become a very happy man buying this and that for a cross-country ride that should end when I found employment to please me. The employment, I decided, should be one in which I might identify myself with the economic machinery of the world. It should be no blind alley, but an open road offering advancement. It should have something to do with things moving and not static. But lacking trade and profession, whatever that employment might be I must start at the lowest rung. So the world was open for adventure once more, and I set off with a blithe heart, slept at night under the stars, and, like the pilgrim, "when I awoke I sang."

CHAPTER II

Breaking In

I

THERE were times far from easeful during our six weeks' horseback ride, especially in the desert lands beyond Sierra Blanca. Still my companion, Ferguson, had the stuff of a frontiersman in him and could front hunger and a long ride in the blazing sun without erecting an altar to grief, so matters were not so bad. For me it was good to get back to a challenging world. It was good to know far horizons and open plains, and great stretches of country without a break, for those were days when it was possible to ride from the outskirts of Laredo, across cactus plains, along Pecos valley, into the staked plains and over the boundary to New Mexico without once opening a gate. They were days before the discovery of oil in those parts. They were days when there were still freighters in the land, hard old customers who dragged coupled wagons from railroad points into the interior, their teams a wonder of horses and mules and burros, their harness a fantastic arrangement of leather, rawhide, rope, wire and chains. There were then men who knew, from experience, that the tarantula was harmless as a sparrow, and the rattlesnake's reputation for evil far in excess of its deserts, and who said so, and laughed newspaper men to scorn who held otherwise. There were men who heartily believed that the war between the north and the south would be followed by a war between the east and the west, who looked upon a Yankee as more of a foreigner than a Mexican, who knew old ballads that had an old-world flavor, who referred to places east of the Mississippi as "back in the states."

Ferguson and I spent a night with a snake man at Pecos, and saw the stock that he would ship to zoölogical gardens and to menageries. He opened a great bin that stood at the back of his house and revealed a writhing tangle of snakes: blunt-headed, beady-eyed, scarlet and black-ringed harlequin snakes; thick-bodied, cat-eyed vipers; dangerous gray sand adders; rattlesnakes horned, white, red, gray; black snakes, water snakes, diamond-back snakes, copperheads, cotton mouths, moccasins. Into the box he thrust his ungloved hand to pick up this one and that at choice, holding it up to show its points and merits, than dropping it back into the mass. "They just don't get me, that's all," he said when we expressed wonder and fear.

We spent a couple of days with the fighting sheriff, the same man who, in Tom McClosky's saloon, had engaged in a protracted session at poker with the renowned Captain Archer. Almost three days and two nights, with limited periods for sleep, the men had sat; and as the game progressed and folks became interested, bulletins were hung out in front of the saloon, Captain A. so much ahead, R. S. so much to the good. R. S. was a guardian to whom all that section looked for protection. We hit the bad lands of the Pecos valley and had to fight with cattle for water for our horses at a plains windmill that pumped a miserable dribble of water into a hole in the ground, which hole was tramped into stinking mud by water-starved longhorns. . . . We suffered terribly too from mosquitoes.

We hit Pueblo Isleta at the end of an earth-baked day and rode through a cloud of dust that hung waist high, and it was like fording a lake to move through the sand that floats so strangely in the lower air. I see the place in memory as I saw it then from the porch of a Mexican adobe house; the hard cloudless sky all gold and red, the yellow earth, the low-built church of adobe that had stood long before King Charles the First was beheaded, and before La Salle explored Canada, for it was commenced shortly after the Dutch had settled New Amsterdam. I see now the two squat white towers with a cross between, a narrow window and a white door; to the right, a wall pierced by low arches that was the outside of it. The door was open, or at least unlocked, so I went into the quiet where a good-natured holy man in a cassock greeted me with a half-nod and a half-smile, then effaced himself in the way of men of the church in Catholic churches. I asked my friar, having found him again, if I might play the organ awhile, whereupon he led the way up the aisle and past the altar, then ascended a stair and so we came to a dim loft. The instrument was of French make, with keys like a piano, and with a bellows worked by lever, and what did the priest do but set to work to pump for me, at which I felt ashamed for a while. But soon we were both enjoying it all and a buoyant companionship sprang up between us so that we went on from churchly music to other, and got the best that could be out of our hour. Being satisfied, I went with the churchman to his house where we drank wine and ate cheese made of goat's milk, comparing notes as we feasted. He told me the strange legend of how that church came to be there; how when Cortez's men were going north to look for the lost cities of Cibola they found, one morning, that which ever way they tried to drag the cart that contained the cross and religious things, somehow before many yards the cart stuck. The men tried north and they tried south; they tried east and then west, between compass points too, but to no avail. So it being clear that there was a message from heaven, they yielded, planted a church, and there, ever since, Isleta has stood, the oldest mission settlement in America north of the Rio Grande and south of Quebec.

At El Paso I went into one of the last of the old-time gambling halls where a man who was Bret Harte's Jack Oakland to the life sat on a platform under a white light, a very handsome fellow in his evening dress and his silk hat. At the tables were all sorts and conditions of men, white and yellow, but not Negro. It was at El Paso that I became acquainted with Pat Garrett, who later made known to me his daughter Elizabeth, a blind girl, gifted with a voice that was an experience and a pleasure to hear. Some months later she and I gave a concert or two in New Mexican towns, and the only bitter ingredient in the cup of joy for Elizabeth Garrett was the egregious blunder of some dunderhead who advertised her as "the daughter of Pat Garrett who killed Billy the Kid."

But while those experiences were interesting and while I enjoyed them, reveries and an uneasy consciousness that I was doing nothing that counted either for myself or for anyone else possessed me. Nor could I know that I stood on the eve of a change. Yet a change was pending and it came about in this way.

On the edge of the Sacramento Desert, and in sight of the alkali patch known as White Sands, stood a new-made town. There commenced an adventure by which I marched to a new horizon, that of moderate success, as one might say. For I had told myself that I had force, toughness and working qualities, which should be used for my own advancement. Further I had decided that I would take the first thing that offered in the way of a job, be it lumbering in the Sacramento mountains, or working in the local box factory, or digging an irrigation ditch. It happened to be railroading, which pleased me, because that work involved a measure of travel. It was only a small niche that I could fill, but I decided to hold fast in it until I could squeeze into another niche a step higher. I conceived my niches somewhat as a series of those recesses for statues that you may see along the wall of some public building where a stairway winds. Also there was this. Knowing nothing about that brotherhood of man called unionism, I had formed a pleasing picture in my mind of a fine fellowship with emancipation from class distinction, all men alike coöperating intelligently in the work for progress. My eyes were opened and my mind prepared for much when I heard the fierce-eyed cook at the boarding house where I stayed say to the wife of a machinist, as she nodded at a figure passing the window, "A brakeman's wife dressed like that! A brakeman! In a silk dress. You'd think her husband was a conductor at the least."

"I'm sure it's hard to tell what the world's coming to," said the machinist's wife. "My husband's own helper's wife's a sight to see what with silk! And him a mere helper."

So I came to see, and presently accept, the existence of social distinctions of great rigidity. I came to know a scale that descended, that bifurcated, that ramified. There were grades in the executive department that ran from chairman of the board who earned much and did remarkably little, down to assistant to third vice-president, and from him through social capillaries to all kind of secretaries and assistants, and chief clerks and stenographers. There were social ramifications in the legal department from general counsel down through offices in which sat general attorneys, and merely attorneys; then descended to big fish who were claim agents, and lesser fish who were tax agents, and chief claim agents and lesser claim agents, with local attorneys in every town, and in very small towns very small local attorneys whose sole emoluments were annual passes. There were strong social levels, well defined, especially among the women, whereby the wife of a comptroller took precedence of the wife of a general auditor; but she ranked higher than the wife of an assistant general auditor, who in turn could look down on the wife of the car accountant, who was a notch higher than the wife of the auditor of the freight receipts, who sat higher than the wife of the auditor of the passenger receipts, who was several cuts above the wife of the traveling auditor, who could look down upon the wives of chief clerks, who were superior to wives of mere clerks, and the last narrowly admitted male stenographers within the pale. And there was a traffic department set, beginning with the passenger traffic manager, to go through general passenger agent, and assistant general passenger agent, and superintendent of dining-car service, and so down to supervisor of agriculture; and then in the freight department which ran a trifle lower than the passenger, down through assistants and generals and assistant generals and assistants to assistants, until the general live-stock agent came in sight, and in his rear an army of chief clerks and clerks and stenographers, each of them graded according to the rank of his superior. Next came the operating department, with its self-assertive general manager, and the assistant general manager, and the assistant to the general manager finely distinct from his immediate superior; then the chief engineer, and the mechanical superintendent, and the general superintendent of transportation, and general superintendent of the first and the second and the third districts, and the purchasing agent, and the general storekeeper; then a ramification into division storekeepers, and storekeeper's assistants, and keepers of the material yards, and oil-house men, and foremen of the yard gauge. The grades and distinctions were as finely marked and observed as in the court of a monarch.

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That gives something of an idea of a scene into which I stepped when I went down to the shops to hunt a job. At first I asked a clerk how one went about making application, but it soon became plain that civility was not familiar to him.

"Worked in railroad before?" he asked, and when I said that I had not, for I mentally eliminated my boyhood experience, he rose to extreme heights of self-consciousness. "No chance then," he told me. "This ain't no kindergarden." It was abundantly clear that the young man had accepted standards of judgment up to which I did not come. He anticipated controversial conflict, for he added, "Anything more to say?"

When I reached the door he tacked on a postscript: "Might see the roundhouse foreman. He'll show you where to head in at."

So I sought the roundhouse foreman, planning to put my case compactly, but at sight of him my determination shivered into atoms. He bore all the appearances of one filled with pig-like obstinacy; narrow sloping shoulders into which a neck merged, a small obstinate head, an inconsiderable chin, eyes that shifted continually, a habit of talking out of the corner of his mouth, the sort of man whose mental grasp is always weak and never anything but partial. That such a fellow could have attained to any position of management by force of character was unthinkable, but a measure of power he had, therefore it must have been gained by chicane.

"Whatjerwant?" he asked me truculently, but there was no call on me to answer, because while he said it there came a thick-lipped and blundering fellow all full of vitality and earnestness. This newcomer uttered combustibilities and testified to his own eternal degradation the while he gesticulated with a fire-expander. Incandescent anger flashed from his soul and he spoke of leaving the matter at issue with God. He breathed anger inextinguishable and told the foreman, among other things, that the entire organization wandered in a maze of errors, that proper influence was nothing but vague and shadowy, that he would gladly see the downfall of the entire structure. He put the matter concretely with harsh zeal, looking like a bull gorilla while he did so; but the foreman, conciliatory and humble, all his truculency stripped from him, did nothing more than interject parenthetical remarks about his own life's weariness. He bore the boiler maker's most scathing remarks with equanimity. He heard himself reviled yet stood as one detached from the scene. But amid the luridities and expletives and ancilliary matter there lay hidden the gist of the affair which was that the boiler maker had been given, for helper, a fellow of feebleness and ignorance. When the boiler maker came to an end the foreman spoke, testifying to the love and loyalty he bore the boiler maker's union, how he enjoyed the fine frankness of the boiler makers. But he also deplored the tendency of the age, an age that produced no young men willing to undergo the training and drilling necessary to fit them to become expert boiler maker's helpers.

Then it was that on the spur of the moment I broke in and proclaimed myself to be one possessed of all necessary qualifications for boiler maker's helper, at which declaration the foreman gave a half sigh, looked at me evilly, then affected a masterful manner. "You get yer chance," he said, then turned his back and made some remark, for the boiler maker's benefit, having nothing to do with my case. It was not thoughtlessness that made him act thus and so, but a deliberate effort to debase and degrade me, his social inferior. That spirit ran through the place. Presently noticing me again he said, snarling, "You get to hell out of here an' over to engine 503. . . . An' get a move on." I did so.

Engine 503 stood out in the yard on a repair siding, under a blazing New Mexico sun, and the rim of the manhole was so hot that my hand shrank from it when I touched it. But inside the fire box the heat was not so painful. The front end was open and a breeze stirred. My boiler maker seemed to have a feeling that we would get along very well, so we lit our pipes and he told me that he wanted to hear my story. He put leading questions, having nothing to do with railroading, and as he talked, or listened, he rigged up a brace very cleverly to set his ratchet drill against a broken stay-bolt. To try to break records, I gathered, was a sort of infidelity to labor. It was "scabbin'," he declared, and "The bosses gets all they can out of us an' we've got to get all we can out of them," he added. "There ain't no reward for quick labor," he went on. "We sell our time in the highest market an' 't's all there is to it." Then seeing that all promised well, he departed. But he framed his face in the manhole a minute later and said, "Bo! You don't happen to have a dollar in your jeans. Ought to be worth a glass or two of beer, me getting you this here job." So I paid the dollar and did not see him again until some twenty minutes before noon. By common consent there was a ten-minute wash-up time on the company. So fifty and more of the boiler-shop gang lined up at a long trough filled with hot water and after stripping to the waist we went to work grimly and with resolution. Our superiors, the boiler makers, were smoking and indulging in light playfulness, for their washing time was five minutes earlier and in a place more private.

Three weeks in all I played boiler maker's helper and found my fellows very worthy folk, companionable and generous and touched with healthy humor. But capital and labor in that particular instance were at loggerheads and would so remain. Both sides were obstinate, both stupid, both selfish. I knew, at that time, nothing of the ways of high officials but I came to see afterwards that they, like the men in the shops, were spendthrifts in company affairs, and spendthrifts is the only word for it. I am sure that in an eight-hour day few men did more than four hours of real work. There were absurdities in the way of customs and agreements that made for endless expense. Once my boiler maker and I were appointed to take out a stay-bolt that lay behind a copper pipe, and being on the job first, I uncoupled the pipe and had just finished when Dick Montana, my boss, came.

"Who the 'ell took down the copper pipe?" he asked, and I confessed.

"Put it back," he said. "'T's coppersmith work."

I reset the pipe while he sat and smoked, and the job being done he instructed me as to the proper way. So, following established routine, I went to the chief clerk of the mechanical department who sent me to his assistant; he in turn heard my tale and made a requisition on the copper-shop foreman. But the requisition had to be signed by the shop foreman. Next came a journey to the copper shop, but the foreman of that department was somewhere else. I found him in the paint shop, talking with the paint foreman and so earnest about his ideas on free silver and sixteen to one that I had to wait some time. But at last I had my coppersmith in tow, and at last he had his helper carrying unneeded tools—be it said, I had unscrewed the coupling with my hands. So we went to the locomotive where Montana sat on the engineer's seat in a doze; then the coppersmith's helper unshipped the pipe while the coppersmith and I looked on. But the job had to be charged as one that took an hour in the doing, so the coppersmith men watched us a while; and when the back-shop foreman passed he averted his gaze from our group, being no man to raise trouble by undue interference with sound union principles.

It must not be supposed that non-union men were more satisfactory. I saw the same shops later under open-shop rule, with strike breakers and detectives and agitators at work. It was confusion worse confounded. The whole organization lacked honesty, honor, truthfulness, fidelity, courage and integrity. It was not like that, could not be like that on board a ship where self-discipline and sincerity of effort were necessary for the common good. It was not like that among a party of gold diggers with the common interest in mind. It was not that way on estancias where Nature herself commanded cheerful obedience. Nowhere had I seen men who magnified the importance of unimportant things as did those who ranged themselves in opposite camps in this, my first experience of capitalistic activity. Nowhere had men talked so much about "rights" and as little about right. These men lived in sloven plenty, they did not work a tenth part as hard nor a fourth as long a time as men worked on the pampas and plains; they knew nothing of the hardship of nature; yet they were full of miserable discontent with their lot.

Also, dishonesty hung like poison gas everywhere. Everybody mistrusted everybody else, and with reason. A couple of boiler makers visited Montana and the three men sat in the engine cab while I reamed. Presently a call boy passed and one of the men hailed him. "Take this wrench up-town and bring back some beer," he said, and off went the boy, taking the whole thing for granted, returning soon with four cans of beer. That particular wrench I knew because of a certain dent in the handle, and on the Saturday following I saw it in the second-hand dealer's shop.

Then came calamity in the paint shop and with it the end of my crashing boiler-shop experience. Because of controversy about some breach of etiquette between wives at a church ice-cream social, the foreman of the paint shop found himself opposed to one of his men, and argument mounting, other men took sides; so there came ramifications and charges and counter charges, and at last the foreman was denounced as a wholesale thief, whereupon company detectives, glad of an opportunity to prove their worth, investigated. Strange things came to light, so strange that the affair touched the accounting department and clerks had to revise charges made for the cost of coach painting. Upstairs and downstairs in the paint-shop foreman's house strange loot was found: forty-odd kegs of white lead, some of them bearing original company shipping tags, bundles of paint brushes, oils and varnishes, chamois leather in bundles, diamonds for glass cutting, gold leaf, a large caboose stove, a locomotive headlight, three new typewriters, brass coach fittings, mirrors, lanterns, office lamps, a room fitted in the style of a Pullman car washing room. The man had taken things in the spirit of a mediæval robber knight, not stealthily, but driving up to the shop with a wagon, piling the plunder into it in plain daylight, next filling the wagon with old boxes and boards, and still not satisfied, driving past the general offices. In court and under arrest he talked freely and unaffectedly about the ease in which he, like his superiors, helped himself. Counsel for the prosecution put questions to witnesses in fear and trembling because answers brought forth too much information and it seemed as if belief in the sacredness of property had entirely disappeared.

"You say you went to Chicago every month or so for a week-end?" asked the learned counsel of one man. "Did not that take a great part of your salary?"

"I bought railroad passes from the wife of an official," came the answer, and the matter was pursued no further. The trial came to a swift end when by some forgetfulness a prison keeper left several doors unlocked and the paint foreman went his way in the night.

I have told elsewhere how I drew up a set of printed forms by the use of which minor stealing in the shops became almost an impossibility, and how I experienced difficulty in getting to the proper office with my invention. For something very similar to the system introduced into national management by Bismarck prevailed in the railroad organization, and Bismarck, you remember, provided that no subordinate should directly address the king. Bismarck, by a sort of court machinery, had to be the focussing glass, the intermediary, the interpreter. And it is my experience that in many industrial organizations there are political machineries that exactly match the machineries of courts. As a king is surrounded with place hunters, so also is an executive surrounded, and those surrounding him lie, cheat, distort, flatter, hide, frown and smile, with the result that the august presence lives and must needs live in a very unreal world. How do I stand in the estimation of the presence? is the morning thought of an army of high-placed sycophants in organizations that are regarded in the light of models. In the very real sense the man with the strangle hold is the mouthpiece of divinity, the name of the god being Mammon. About the mouthpiece and in high places are subordinate officials despotic as any Persian satrap, sycophantic where favors are to be expected, overbearing in their conduct to inferiors—all to the end that personal advantage may be gained. For man in that which is miscalled civilization is a patchwork of cowardice and bravery, and political forms cannot change him.

Because of all that business of weak men hiding behind influence it was not so easy to get my system of requisitions past the outer guard. The storekeeper's chief clerk looked at my papers, eying them from a distance as he sat back in his swivel chair with his hands clasped above his head. You have seen that sort of people who must always be negative, who must always act as if the expression of graceful thanks were to be strenuously resisted, who look upon a suggestion as something very much like an insult, who are always in opposition. He was of the sort. He regarded me in the light of a butter-in. He conjured up an atmosphere of displeasure, and, being wary of human upas trees, I left him.

Things were no better in the purchasing department. The people there had all the dangerous suavity of my old acquaintance, Andrew Lang, the smoothness of those who lie and cheat and steal. "We shall look into it," the chief clerk told me. "Leave your papers here."

Another scornful chief clerk in the general superintendent's office told me to leave what I had brought to the end that they might have expert examination. It struck me that remarkable limitations were taken for granted, because when he had learned of my position he said, "Why the devil does a boiler-maker's helper interest himself in this sort of thing? That's what I want to know."

I told him I would like to see the general superintendent, whose private office adjoined the one in which I stood. Mr. Pickwick's request for a private interview with Justice Nupkins could have caused no greater consternation.

"You want to what?" exclaimed the clerk. It was clear that I had suggested something quite outside his experience. There was in his words and his look a highly compounded blend of astonishment, disgust, anger and resentment. It was evident that to persuade the clerk to my way would take a higher degree of skill and more clever maneuvering than I could compass. So, mastered by a spirit of pugnacity, I marched on the door and the chief clerk rose to intercept me, but not soon enough. In the inner place, which had furnishings of mahogany and red leather, the Personage sat in a state of placid happiness, with his feet on his desk, reading the *Saturday Evening Post.* Aware of the invasion, the general superintendent dropped his magazine into the waste-paper basket and regarded me curiously.

"Your business?" he asked.

"It's something I can manage," interjected the clerk.

They spoke almost at the same instant, and I, too, said my say, flinging out a mighty brace of names and leaving what might to be inferred. "Stilwell—Topolobampo," I said, because Stilwell and his railroad scheme happened to be much in the western railroad mind. At the magic name I had prestige. Interest was awakened. The great man nodded in a large tolerant way to the clerk, and the eager guardian withdrew. Now on the pampas it was a saying that whoso knew a good horse and a good dog must needs be a correct judge of men. We held it as true and did make a habit of summing up men at first sight. I summed my man up as a fellow of frontage, who was brilliant in a superficial way, who would climb at any cost, who would use others for his own advantage. Indeed no one could be in the town very long without knowing him to be all that; he saw to it, and saw that others should see to it, that his name was affixed to the bottom of all kinds of orders and bulletins and notices that hung in the depot, shops, offices, waiting rooms, drug stores and elsewhere. He overtopped everyone, not as much by his personal eminence as by what he stood on, and he stood on the shoulders of everyone with whom he came into contact. He was a self-made man composed of numberless intangibles taken from others.

"This here," he said in a rich tone of voice, "this here is got value." He fluttered my forms, shifting and arranging them, making running comments on a fictional case of a workman requiring a certain tool and being forced to return it before he could get his time for the day. He saw the application of a feature by which a certain job was charged and credited with the cost of tools used so as to get an accurate idea of repair cost. "Must be some slip up somewhere," he said, "or our auditin' department would have invented something like this here." Then he looked up. "But they didn't. They didn't. Tell me. Why didn't they?" I pointed out that special skill was apt to run into routine; that departments were, more or less, in a sort of veiled antagonism.

He considered a moment. "Yes. They get to figgers and stay with 'em. It gets to be figgers and not things. They get to percentage and make a kind of game of things. Special skill. . . . Yes, by gad, special skill runs to routine. But they ought to get together with other departments. Why don't they? That's what I want to know?"

I explained. "There's antagonism in a sort of way. There's jealousy. There's the fear of seeming to butt in. At least that's how it seems to me."

"Yes. There's antagonism," he agreed.

"Veiled. Almost unconscious," I added.

"Yes. Veiled antagonism. I'll make a note of that, and a note of 'special skill runs in routine.'" He wrote on a memorandum pad. "Why don't they get together? I know they don't. Me, I'm what you might call the graphite cuttin' down the friction."

"Coördination's about the rarest thing except aboard ship," I said. For I was feeling my oats as the saying has it.

"Gad, yes," the general superintendent said. "We don't trust one another. None of us. We don't trust them in public office. They don't trust us. I don't trust any department and every department suspects me. Everybody's cheatin' and lyin' and stealin'. We've supplied every man within fifty miles of the railroad with shovels, I bet a dollar. Go on a train and what d'ye see? The judge rides on a pass. The lawyers, they do. The railroad men do of course. The politicians, they do. The theatrical folks, they do. The preachers, they do. The wives and children of all of them too. Big shippers do. Policemen and sheriffs, except when they're on business, and then the people pays the bill. Sometimes I wonder who the devil does pay fare."

He ran out of conversational material there, but in the way of small-minded men wandered into a maze of reminiscence not pertinent to the case.

"Well, what about the forms I've suggested?" I asked when he slackened.

At my question it was altogether a different man at the desk.

He pulled himself out of his mood of decent friendly intercourse. He became the man of snap and of push. Obviously he was acting a part and imitating some executive, real or imaginary; possibly a master of men as portrayed in some story. He corrugated his forehead to signify a man of wisdom and dignity and strength. He began to flutter his papers by way of indicating that the interview was at an end, and he probably pressed his buzzer, for the chief clerk appeared with a letter file.

"Well, I'll consider the matter," he said to me, with a note of icy irritation in his voice, and the sudden change into play acting jogged me into most surprising speech.

"One thing more about all that dishonesty——" I began, but stopped when the superintendent looked at me sharply, as the chief clerk had entered. "Excuse us a moment longer," I said to the chief clerk, taking matters in hand. And in his eyes I saw dark lightnings, but accumulated experiences somehow told me that I would win.

"Come when I call," said the superintendent to the clerk, and the young man effaced himself. He drifted off rather than walked.

"Well, what?" asked the superintendent testily.

"Why, all that's mine and something's coming to me," I said, indicating the papers.

He regarded me with a searching eye, a quelling eye, a commanding eye. But it was also a challenging eye and I accepted the challenge feeling that I knew my man. Also the thought ran through my mind that on the pampas he would be nobody of importance, probably a useless mouth, which reflection heartened me mightily.

"Truth is that I have no notion of giving up a good idea to have it twisted and then used as your own," I told him. "Besides, that's only part of the general idea."

"Where the devil was you raised?" he asked. "Who are you, anyway?" He radiated suspicion. There was some ostentatious signing of a letter or two. The action reminded me of some male animal on the verge of trying conclusions with another, that pretence of being engaged in indifferent things the while an eye was kept warily on the opponent. The fellow and I strove for mastery as any fighters might strive, but the antagonism was veiled. So I threw down the gage, told him that dishonesty in business was not checked because everyone hoped to have a chance to be dishonest, and much more, part true, part ridiculous, and the end of it was that I found myself installed after a few days as "In Charge of Material and Supplies." But my manager had to impose himself, had to twist something or other to give it the stamp of his own originality. "There should be," he told me, "a line here for signature," and here the name of general superintendent should appear, and the margin should be narrower, and the paper of a cheap grade where the shops were concerned, but of a better grade where the offices had to do with the forms. For he was the executive in spite of his ignorance in many directions. His name printed everywhere signified mastery, and mastery implied subjection. It also implied admiration. His name meant the whip, and the strangle hold, the power of inflicting punishment and giving reward. He was neither wholly excellent nor wholly charlatan, but a patchwork of both.

3

The upshot of all that is something like this: my years in the untamed lands served to train me for the part I took in commercial life. I entered the business field with no knowledge of the economic life, without prepossessions, and what is better, unhampered by taboos and conventions, so everything was interesting and sometimes exciting. I had no special qualifications, as qualifications were counted by efficiency engineers, but the life I had lived made for an alertness that stood me in good stead. Thrown among men in whom those habits and qualities I had acquired or cultivated existed in less degree than they existed in me, and with those men often lax because of their many years of monotonous toil, it became an easy matter to pass competitors.

As I have said, I was unhampered by conventions. Perhaps it would be better to say that I walked a middle way, going between humility and pride, though unconsciously. For example, in that little railroad town where pianos were not common, I heard the sound of one, very badly played, at a time when I was hungry for music, and, making inquiries, found that it belonged to the general manager of the railroad. But I had not looked upon him in the light of a terrible three-tailed Pasha, so it seemed the obvious thing, when I met him on the street, to stop him for a friendly word, as I would have hailed a rider on the pampas, in nothing but a spirit of friendly cheerfulness. Said I, "I'm hungry to play that piano of yours which I heard the other night. What evening shall I drop in?" I had in mind an adventure, and nothing more, but I discovered later by doing what I did that I became the object of reproach in the eyes of my fellow workers. Not one of them but would have liked to do as I did, but they were afraid of the phantom of their fellows' criticism. Need it be said that the man in power welcomed my suggestion, that we had a pleasant hour with no word or thought of business advantage, with no ulterior motives whatever? The shadow of the knotted club of executive dignity did not darken sociability because neither of us had thought of the weapon. For an hour the superior became the inferior because he knew nothing about music, nor about books, and in an easy-going way both of those were means of entertainment. The magical glamour that surrounds the chief of a tribe fell away. Nor was that incident singular. The important thing is not that I took liberties but that I could not bring myself to become tangled in unnecessary complications, did not appreciate all the elaborations, and aimed at direct relations. Also my training had run contrary to formalism. I could and can enjoy pompous parade as a spectacle, but not pompous parade to produce subordination. Display for amusement is well enough; for getting obedience it is ridiculous. The one is art; the other deception for a base purpose. One makes for gaiety of nations and fullness of life; the other implies something altogether different, the servility of the race.

4

Six months after I set foot on the first rung of the railroad ladder there came changes. I married. As to business, the road was sold and it was a case of each for himself and the devil take the hindmost. Men high and low involved themselves in diplomatic activities with the idea of securing themselves with the new management and at the same time keeping up a show of loyalty to the old. There were made efforts by many to bask in the sunshine of the new presence. The general superintendent, full of sagacity, and having provided himself with a position in Ohio, resigned in New Mexico. Two days before his departure he summoned me to his office. His talk ran on different subjects and it was quite a while before he came to the point. Then it came out. He had listed my name as one to be dismissed by the new management.

I expostulated and sought enlightenment, the more because of my family ties.

"I got a better job for you," he said. "You're my man and I take you with me. There's all sorts of graft on the new job and you'll have a good time seeing what high finance's like."

He went on talking, giving odd side lights on his philosophy. "A good boss knows how to get other men's ideas. . . . If you find yourself in a position of authority and don't know what to do, sit tight and say nothing and be a mystery man. They'll take you for a wise and deep fellow and someone or other on the job will work out the problem. In a tight place the executive passes the buck. Then pat 'em on the back and adopt their plan. . . . Never be afraid of organized labor because there ain't no real brotherhood and one union aims to be the aristocrat among unions. The locomotive engineers they're at the top and all join to keep there. One union'll call a strike, other unions'll talk sympathy, but soon as trouble touches the pockets of the union not on strike, down will go the under dog. . . . Think any union's going on strike, f'r instance, to support the section laborers? Never be afraid of the big man. He may know something, but he don't know all and he'll bluff somewhere. Get him at his game of bluff and you got him pretty nearly everywhere else."

"But this job. What is it?"

"Auditor. You'll be auditor," he told me, and followed up the astonishing announcement by a good five-minutes rant about the importance of a title, and his appreciation of my work, and how this one and that had climbed from water-boy to president. He testified to his own true faith in the reward of industry. He told me of his integrity of purpose.

"The trouble is that I'm no accountant," I told him.

"What's that matter? You got common sense. Keep your mouth shut. There'll be bookkeepers there, won't there? Why, the very fact that in this here country we elect anyone to any office shows a man don't have to know anything about the thing he bosses. Think any man learns how to be president? Not on your life. Anyone can do the job because all he's got to do is to be a figgerhead. Elect a man, and he takes on a job he don't know nothing about. Don't be afraid of a job. . . . And see here. I been watching you. I know men, I do. If there's a crooked streak in you it ain't in the money line. Tell you what I'll do. You resign right now. Take a lay off. Buy a book or two about accounting. It shouldn't be hard to catch on to, that is judgin' by men what I see in auditin' offices at the head of things. And go round these here offices gettin' copies of all the forms they got. That'll go a long way. Oh, we won't resist the decrees of Providence, you and me. Not a bit of it."

It had never occurred to me that a man could regard himself in the light of a deliberate humbug and yet be an important cog in the economic machine because he was a humbug, but such was the case with Scully, the superintendent. He revealed himself to me with a sort of Machiavellian clarity. The successful executive, he said, created all sorts of minor bosses each of which he could make or unmake at a word. "All men like to boss," he told me. "All men like titles. So I give 'em titles. If they don't play up good, then I abolish the office and there you are. And I always pump 'em to see what ideas they got. If a man knows more'n me, I make him learn me what he knows. Now what would you call that, putting it into fine words?"

"Alertness, I suppose," I said. "Or, say, systematic search for new ideas."

He was highly pleased with the terminology. "Yes. That's it," he said, and in his excitement smoked his cigar greedily. "And I like to keep in touch with how things are going. Special service men, you know. It comes in useful at times. A sorehead here. A stirrer up of trouble there. Now how would you put that in a good way? Eh?" I hazarded a reply to the effect that he aimed at searching for detailed information.

"To a T. Puts it to a T. . . . And don't let too many get too near you. Another thing. A good manager does better keeping himself aloof. He's got to be like a king. If he makes it an honor to get near him, everyone'll set him up high. That's what. Men like to do it. Like to have idols. Besides, every man's fame's way ahead of what he deserves. You got to fool 'em. You got to get 'em where a 'Howd'ye' to a man gets to be an honor. You got to have the men where they'll say to one another, 'I was talking to the boss yesterday an' he told me this.' There's the secret. . . . Don't fool yourself. The higher up you get the less hard you'll work. Talk about responsibility's nonsense. If it wasn't, why'd everyone push for the top job? Eh? Tell me that. There ain't no more'n one responsibility and that is to get near the place where the money comes from, and to pay the interest regular, an' to jolly the men with money they're going to get a good thing soon, an' to keep the payroll low when the interest bill's high."

I found that he spoke the truth and that the elements of bookkeeping were simple as the multiplication table. As for railroad accounting, the Interstate Commerce Commission was at once Polaris and compass. And in the railroad offices of Scully's new road there were clerks who showed tremendous solicitude and who were highly desirous to have everything go well. So that end of things went well enough. But there was another and a new end for me.

"Monday's directors' meetin' and I'm going to put you in," Scully told me.

"To do what?" I asked.

"Nothin'. Just nothin' at all. Do somethin' and you're out. All out."

On Monday morning then came the local lawyer, a grizzled man and secretive, who was secretary of the N. A. & Z., and he carried a book of stock certificates. He filled out a certificate in my name; said he thought I would make a good director, expressed an opinion that now the road was in proper hands the town would boom and the countryside flourish as it had never before, then "And now we'll complete the business," he said, and turned the certificate over, it being still in the book and undetached. He pointed to the line on which I should sign as turning over to the N. A. & Z. all rights and interest in said certificate.

Edward A. Hibbert, banker and capitalist acting as president, called the meeting to order. There were five seated about the table; Scully and a merchant, and I stood about. Hibbert, a man of small and shifty eyes, and a sallow skin, and a thin body, had a nervous way with him. He was thin-lipped and gentle of manner, almost apologetic indeed. It struck me as peculiar that he should constantly refer to Scully though Scully was not of the directorate. They scrambled through preliminaries, then Scully advised the lawyer's resignation with myself elected in his place by power of a unanimous vote representing 5,000 shares of stock. Next Scully laid on the table a paper showing that I voted proxies of 4,995 shares of stock, so Scully stepped into the chair and Hibbert stepped out. Then Scully himself voted 4,994 proxies, and one named Bowden resigned and the friendly merchant took his place. "And now that's all right, and we're all comfortable," said Scully. "So there being no further business we'll swear and sign minutes and all that, then adjourn."

So the ridiculous affair ended and we walked into the outer office discoursing as we went about the future of the road, and the future of the town, and the future of the county, everyone's words being in the nature of sound without sense.

5

Thus commenced several years of activity. I felt happy that my system of requisitions worked so admirably that even Scully could not have a box of cigars for his private use charged to the company without signing and requesting and going through so much that he found it advantageous to pay for his own smoking. When it became necessary to look into the past for the purpose of making a correct statement of the original cost of the road for the Interstate Commerce Commission, my peace of mind fled. It transpired that someone had sometime stolen a bridge, a steel structure that would have spanned a good-sized river had such been there. The cost of it had been paid by financial interests backing the venture, but no such bridge could be found. Someone had also stolen cars of new rails; and a set of office furniture; and three or four construction pay rolls; and a piece of land; and a house; and mules; and cement; and lumber; and a trip to Europe; and two cross-continental trips; a barge load of coal. A master hand with a tremendous gift for graft had been at work. Another with a taste for mechanics had charged to the railroad the cost of experiments leading to the manufacture of an automobile, and the results of the experiment went to Detroit.

Scully enjoyed each fresh discovery as an explorer enjoys the outspread scene viewed from new height. That the trail led to the unsuspecting Hibbert made no difference at all in the manager's social relations with the banker. They met at dinners, Hibbert always quiet and humble and unobtrusive; Scully always boisterous and flamboyant. Nor did Scully reveal his carefully prepared effects until he had the whole edifice complete, with certified accountant's reports and vouchers and canceled checks. But when Hibbert should have been crushed, according to the best romantic traditions, he carried himself with sustained dignity. He addressed me, rather than Scully.

"Exactly," he said. "Exactly. I knew that things would have a kind of off-color look. That's why I insisted upon an expert. But all will come out. It will come out. There's always some underground way of escape."

But the gods were playing the game.

CHAPTER III

Playing Executive

I

BY ONE lucky stroke and another, when Scully resigned, I became general manager. By renting out waste lands, making new interline traffic arrangements, stepping outside the true functions of railroading, and, where electric lines were concerned, renting power to towns for light; by one means and another as well as by a certain saving in administration and a narrow scrutiny of expense accounts, the loss side of the balance sheet began to show more favorably. The loss presently turned into a gain, though a slight one, when I bought a tract of rock-bearing land and a couple of stone-crushers and went into the quarrying business so that the roads should reap the benefit of the freight. But there were strikes and stealing to combat; there were floods and fires and minor mishaps; there were state railroad commissioners who insisted on certain schedules on the just plea of the people living along the line, and who ordered stations to be built, and who sometimes commanded that freakish things be done. But there was also the burden of debt because of the ancient monster graft. Also steadily growing there was automobile traffic, an evolution in transportation that obviously must, some day in the near future, work as much havoc in railroad affairs as the advent of the steam engine had worked among holders of turnpike stock that once paid its six per cent. For the New York *Nation* I wrote an article predicting an early dissolution of many roads, mostly short lines, that ran at a loss or were on the ragged edge of losing. It brought me some amazing experiences. A Cleveland firm asked me to consult with them and when I found the man behind the gun I discovered that he had a series of experiments in hand by which his company hoped to perfect a gasoline car for track use. Another company, interested in storage battery cars, offered me a considerable sum of money as inducement to interest small roads in their cars. A third inventor had a railroad car with a steam engine hidden away in its body. In all there were seventeen inventors quietly at work with the idea of producing a self-propelled car that should operate at a much lower cost than the locomotive and cars. But always the inventors ran up against two serious problems. First, no projected invention took account of freight, and small and weak roads tried to make both ends meet by combining freight and passenger service. Second, whenever a self-propelled car for railroad use seemed workable, then the unions and brotherhoods stepped in with full crew laws and similar demands so that the hoped-for cost of operation rate failed to appear.

Meanwhile, apart from the roads and their operation, tremendous machinery was at work—outraged gods of order gloomed. For there was Hibbert and his associates, and there were banking interests smothering and hiding what seemed safe to smother and hide. One way and another connected with the railroads there were more than three million dollars at stake, with bonds pledged and notes outstanding and unpaid interest rolling and rolling up until it became represented by another note. Thus began a new interest-bearing plant.

Yet it seemed hard to believe that the splendor I saw and the luxury that it obtained could be the fragile structure that it really was. On one day my business took me to one of the banks, a place light and airy, with marble counters and cashiers and clerks, all soft-spoken and assiduous, and white-haired old men who were the picture of conservatism and stability in responsible positions; with a stream of money pouring in and pouring out, and a shifting multitude of people coming and going, a uniformed commissionaire at the door; with the soft clicking of adding machines and typewriters in the upper gallery. Had a man with knowledge stood in the lobby and shouted that the whole would fall in ignominious ruin within a week, he would have been thrown into prison as a disturber and a breeder of trouble.

In the president's office security seemed more firmly seated. No sign of subterranean trouble nor hint of outburst there. For upward of an hour Hibbert and I talked, I protesting against the purchase of new railroad cars that would have to be bought with notes and more notes, he talking of the necessity of keeping up appearances. "Outward show helps beyond measure," he kept on saying. But our interview had no consecutiveness. There were interruptions with banking men and stock brokers, and other men who needed five minutes with the presence, and some of them treated him as a demigod to be reverently worshipped. One, flattering, said at the end of an apology for intrusion, "But then the executive differs from ordinary men," and Hibbert, who had slipped down in his chair, suddenly drew himself up and looked dignified and condescending. Presently came lunch time, so Hibbert and I went out into the bank, moving through a throng of genial, attractive and charming people to the door which was flung open by the obsequious braided doorkeeper. We were driven down to the Sinton, had our appetizer at the bar, took our places at a table with two others and ordered expensive fare. We ate while skilled musicians played, and were waited upon by solicitous men who moved soft-footed; and we talked in a light-hearted way, and established kind relations with everyone with whom we came into contact—waiter, hat-check girl, bar tender, chauffeur who took us to the ball grounds where we saw a National League game. We were very respectable and influential looking and free from worry, and in no way willing to get absorbed in toil or business matters. Had the old washwoman who committed suicide ten days later because she lost her life's savings of a hundred and fifty dollars found her way into that dining room and, pointing a finger at Hibbert, cried out upon him as a fellow whose life aim was money and position though he spoiled men, what convulsions would have shaken the place!

Yet a week later Hibbert and one of his associates were under arrest, and after those delays of law that are only for those with wealth, the two of them went to Atlanta; and the bank closed its doors; and half a hundred of petty bosses who had flourished shrunk miserably to their proper level; and a financier died of the shock; and crowds jostled at the doors of other banks; and my railroad and other railroads went into receivership; and in cities as far as Detroit and St. Louis and San Francisco there were men who lived in trepidation, and some so driven to desperation that they fled the country.

It would be wearisome and useless to recount how we strove to make wrong things right, how we wrought to refinance and mend things, how we did actually tide over troublesome times and achieve order where had been disorder. But men's minds were at that time full of other things than localized trouble because of the war in Europe and some saw much money that might be made out of legalized murder in foreign lands. Minds were not on turning swords into plowshares, but rather on turning Golgotha to gold.

But before ending this brief tale of railroad operation it seems well to give something definite in the way of statistics, so I copy a summary from the Interstate Commerce Commission reports, as applying to the smallest of my roads. The purpose of presenting the figures is not to reveal my own excellence, but rather to point a moral in regard to executive expense accounts, for in that department the greatest reduction was made. The heavy earnings in 1912 were due to increased freight that came from my stone quarry.

STATEMENT OF OPERATING EARNINGS AND EXPENSES

Years	Earnings	Expense	Loss	Gain
1906	$16,538.76	$28,451.50	11,912.74	
1907	18,287.97	29,418.03	11,130.06	
1908	16,232.13	35,818.22	19,586.09	
1909	16,889.75	27,587.67	11,697.92	
1910	18,692.12	26,659.85	7,857.36	
1911	18,240.53	33,547.56	15,307.03	
1912	23,791.51	24,516.20	724.59	
1913	26,856.09	21,159.85		5,696.24
1914	25,967.89	23,249.85		2,718.04
1915	23,743.78	22,453.60		1,290.18
1916	26,931.79	25,562.96		1,368.82

But the shining crown and loud trumpets are not for me alone. I had two faithful helpers both of whom I could trust at all times, a lad named Lawrence who left the throttle of a soda fountain to go with me, and a girl named Margaret who watched the treasury with unfailing zeal. Not even I could use a company postage stamp on a private letter.

2

There was a syndicate, I shall call it the Fisher Company, that sought me out and engaged me to buy railroads for them: any one of those miserable concerns that operated at a loss and were ready to seize upon anything that offered hope from ruin. In all I bought nine railroads, five of which I reorganized and four of which I scrapped.

Some brief account of one of the latter seems necessary, because it was perhaps the first time in the history of transportation that a road in that section of the country, maybe in the whole country, was dismantled. The road had originally cost five hundred thousand dollars to build, including that graft and stealing which seem almost inseparable from operations in such cases where financiers know little or nothing about the actual construction. I bought it, operated it for three months, showed the state commission that it must of necessity collapse and was given permission to suspend operation, which in the course of time I did. Then followed lawsuits and injunctions, and arrests on technicalities, and petitions and indignation meetings, and appeals to all kinds of state and federal officials.

Now to tell a law-abiding citizen, or to write a tale for a popular magazine with it being taken for granted that a man could sell a railroad exactly in the offhand manner in which a man could sell a book, would be to expose oneself to doubt; yet in that offhand manner, this road and others, later, were sold. After many adventures with men in New York and Chicago and Kansas City, I went to Pittsburgh where lived a young Jew reputed to be a plunger, who had bought enormous quantities of whiskey because he looked for the coming of prohibition. He had bought half-drilled oil wells, wrecked ships, disused bridges, anything that was offered, because he enjoyed the trading game. So I went into his office and announced that I had a railroad to dispose of. For a while he stared at me in the manner of one looking at a curiosity. Then he broke out into unrestrained uproarishness, next, with a pretence of dazzled admiration, looked at his reflection in a small mirror which he took from his desk.

"Ain't I a boy, now," he exclaimed. "They come to me to buy railroads. Me. I started up as a newsboy. What d'you think of it?" He evidently regarded himself as a favorite of fortune because he spoke of his luck as one led along preordained paths by kindly spirits. In after days I had to listen to many long dissertations given by this man of emotional impulses. The young man, for he was in his middle thirties, thought money, dreamed money, lived for money. He was without a single thought or quality to make a bond with me. Music, literature, pictures, religion, scenery, these he regarded with such utter indifference that I could not help but regard him with vague pity and wonder. But he believed in another self within himself which dominated and enlightened him. At a moment of action that inner self seemed to know what to do and how to do it. At least so I gathered from his saying, "There's another guy inside me what knows the game."

Having recovered from his mood of self-congratulation he asked me about my railroad and I recapitulated swiftly, telling him of the weight of rails, of the locomotives and cars, of bridges and houses, of right-of-way and ties. Although I shot out my information, one item on the heels of another, he remembered everything and subsequently put questions with an air of having forgotten, though I knew his catechizing to have its roots in suspicion.

"Look here," he said. "In three hours I'll tell you whether I'll buy your road or not. Spot cash after inspection. And the man who beats me in a trade isn't born yet."

Thus I came to see a most amazing trader in action. He began a series of long-distance telephone calls and reminded me of an intelligent spider in the center of a web, sensitive to the lightest movement at the end of the thread. He talked with rolling-mill people, with automobile manufacturers, with scrap dealers, with foundries, with makers of car wheels, with munition factory owners, with cantonment contractors, with three lawyers in cities far apart, with a senator. He displayed a knowledge of the requirements of every firm he addressed and sometimes seemed to be aware of the amount of material they had on hand. Talking with a contractor he discovered that they needed a locomotive. He said he had one ready for almost immediate delivery. His description of the piece of equipment amazed me. Knowing it to be the wretched abandoned thing that it was, a worn-out thing of the scrap heap, all weather-beaten and rusted, with slid-flat tires, with blocked-up springs and broken stay-bolts, a medley of broken machinery, I found it difficult to escape from his description of it as a wonderful piece of mechanism of surpassing brilliance and power.

"What's that?" he shouted, at the receiver. "When would it be ready for delivery? Let's say in three weeks." Then came a silence at our end with my man listening, and grinning and nodding as he listened. His coarse ugliness amazed me. "Wait a minute. I got a cold and want to sneeze," he said, and covered the mouthpiece with his hand while he shot the question at me, "What the devil's a thing like that worth? How much does a locomotive cost? Hurry up. The guy's waiting."

I told him that it had been bought as obsolete some six years before for $2,000 but had long since been ordered off the road by the railroad commission as unsafe.

He turned to the phone again, gave his imitation sneeze, declared himself as feeling better, then said, "I'll let you have it subject to prior sale, in sixty days, at $5,500. There's others after it and I won't hold it. I bought a couple of roads, lock, stock and barrel."

"That's a rotten deal," I told him.

"Rotten nothin'," he said. "Them fellows is cantonment contractors, or something of the sort. Cost plus ten per cent. or something like it. Fine as silk! Money's loose with this here war and we might as well get all we can. I'll give you a bonus of $500, if you get it ready on time."

"But you haven't bought the road yet," I argued.

"What's that matter? That's my business, ain't it? I'm going to buy it. Didn't you hear me over the phone? I as good as sold over $40,000 worth of the stuff right there. I'm going to sell till I buy. You watch me. The inside me tells me I got to boost prices. If only that war don't stop too soon I'll make a pile. . . . Think the war's goin' to keep on? It won't stop too soon, will it?"

As we rode to Cincinnati that night he talked and figured, covering the margin of a magazine with penciled calculations as he commented upon what might be done. Power and conquest were his ideals as much as they could have been the ideals of any conquistador. He was like a warrior with a highly developed sense of conquest. Once I spoke of a lawyer who was prominent in fighting the battle for the road's patrons. "We'll hire him on our side," he said. "How much will it take to buy him?"

The inspection of the road left him satisfied, and what followed was done in St. Louis. There negotiations were conducted in a bedroom in the Jefferson Hotel. The St. Louis man who was trustee positively refused to confirm the sale at $60,000. He was adamant. There were, he said, other competitors. "I'm offered $65,000," he announced, "and will close the deal tonight, at dinner."

Like lightning the young Jew raised the price to $66,000, but the St. Louis man spoke of business connections, so there was disputation for a while. Then the phone rang, and we sat and listened to the St. Louis man, talking evenly, rather persuasively, telling his connection that $66,000 was offered. So commenced a fantastic kind of private auction, but at the end my Pittsburgh man was still owner of the road, with the price advanced to $70,000. So matters stood and I wrote out a memorandum of agreement in duplicate, but before signatures were affixed the phone rang again, there was new activity and an upward movement, with the Pittsburgh man bravely meeting each offer until the price stood at $85,000 with Pittsburgh ahead. That ended the battle. Nor did I suspect for a moment that the bidder at the other end of the phone was no capitalist or buyer, but an office hand who had been instructed by the

St. Louis man to call over the phone at stated intervals. Weeks afterwards I told the young Jew, who took it as an immense joke. He had a good-humored tolerance for so good a trader. "By God!" he said, "I wish I could afford to have that St. Louis man on my pay roll."

The new owners employed me to run their road for them, offering liberal pay and a handsome bonus if operation ceased within six weeks. Nor did I have cause for complaint in my dealings with them. They kept their promises and there were neither heats nor chills when they were called upon to meet deficits. Nor were they to be intimidated when a motley array of technical experts and lawyers, small-town officials and property owners threatened. For there was ruthless and relentless opposition when it became known that Jews owned the line.

Of a sudden we were in the middle of all that false and feverish activity which accompanied our entrance into the war. Rails that had cost originally $28 per gross ton and that had seen ten years of service were held at $50 per net ton, the buyer paying the freight. Soon prices leaped. Makers of munitions of war bid madly against one another; cantonment contractors or their agents bid against them. One day three carloads of rails loaded for connections and sold for $60 per ton were resold and reconsigned at $65. Soon prices jumped to $72.50 per ton and there stood until the line was dismantled. Not a pound of iron or steel was left unsold. Not a pound that was not shipped directly from the road to the purchaser. Old ties found ready buyers. Farmers bid against one another, for the right of way which generally ran between neighboring lands. There was no difficulty at all in disposing of bridges, and nothing but the pressure of delivery prevented the selling of one big steel bridge to Herbert Brenon, the moving-picture man, for a spectacular explosion. We could not wait.

As for the railroad wrecking forces and the training of men to a new activity in face of the refusal of local people to labor, the refusal even of office workers and stenographers, there lay an interesting problem. In the end I had my gangs, white men and colored, who worked together in amicability. There were escaped convicts, men who came from far places and gave no account of themselves, a sailor or two, several ex-convicts and some who seemed to be in hiding, besides a sprinkling of husky youths who were with us for the sake of adventure. Floating about were vague menaces of attack and the driving away of undesirables from the neighborhood, but the reputation for toughness that the gangs bore served as protection and people gave the three-tent camps wide berth. On two occasions, when our dismantling operations brought us to a point adjacent to the land of some pugnacious farmer, there was a show of force with shotguns brought into play, but in the end social harmony prevailed. As for the hard-cases of the camps, there was absolutely nothing of the brutality that the unsophisticated have been led to believe as characteristic of the tramp and hobo, by writers who pretend to special knowledge of that class of men. The men of Jim Tully are no more to be found than are the men of Thomas Burke's *Limehouse Nights*. There are, to be sure, criminals in the lower walks of life as there are criminals among millionaires, but the thousand popular stories picturing a layer of criminality are as untrue as the old sea stories portraying hornpiping sailors.

My hard-cases worked well, ate well, stayed with the job well. They submitted readily to rigid discipline in working hours and were free at the end of the day to do as they chose. If a man drank himself to a point of unpleasantness, then those who found their liberties invaded saw to his segregation. And the severity of the work found men ready to rest at the day's end, for there were eight men to a rail gang and each rail weighed eight hundred pounds. Each rail had to be lifted from the ground, carried forward six or eight yards, then loaded on to a hand car which held sixteen rails. The load of twelve thousand eight hundred pounds had to be pushed forward to where a loading gang handled the rails into a gondola car that would hold fifty tons or thereabouts. Men who work in that fashion are not subjects for pathological laboratories. I do not recall one who complained of overwork. But, handling those gangs of men and remembering the lusty strength and the ways of men on the pampas, I saw to it that good honest meat, beef and mutton, was the staple diet, with an allowance of three pounds of meat each day for each man.

Before the dismantling of the road was completed, small roads were being offered in half a dozen different states and I inspected them all for the syndicate. In all cases there were difficulties due to the increase in truck service, exacerbated by labor troubles. In each and every case I found a general manager duly obsessed with an idea of his own importance. Masterful men had long before left the hopeless game. In the case of a small electric line, I closed the deal one morning, and, by a streak of good luck the same afternoon, had sold enough rails to pay the purchase price and have three fifths of what was left as gain.

With the armistice the Jewish road-wreckers ceased their activities as suddenly as with a sword slash, though there were still bargains offered. Everything they had touched within my observation had turned to their profit. They took in the significance of what was happening.

3

Looking back at those years of railroad activity, I perceive that men in executive positions often proved unworthy of the trust placed in them. I am moved to say that because of the popular insanity and rampant hero-worship by which strange figures in the economic as well as in the political world are placed in prominent niches and pointed to as subjects for admiration. Hero worshipers too often go off at half cock. For it is true of executives, as it is true of college professors, that the thing most generally sought by them is ease, not achievement. When a soft place is found, striving ceases. Most men work only under the stimulus of the whip and the spur, and when those stimuli are no longer felt then their native sloth masters them. They begin to shirk. They begin to play. They begin to attitudinize, and to pretend, and to impose upon others. Ceasing to drive themselves they deteriorate, to dwindle, to perish, first losing the power to do ordinary things for themselves such as putting in a telephone call, or writing a letter, or signing their letters after careful reading, or carrying their own bag from an office to a train. They depend too much upon mechanical devices, wherefore their memory becomes weakened, and with the weakening of the memory comes decay. They deputize too much. Matters of discipline become left to subordinates, with those subordinates quite willing to assume duties which should be managerial duties; but while that assumption of duties may be taken by the purblind and dilatory executive for evidence of loyalty to the organization, yet thus to take it is folly because the subordinate is steadily grooming himself for the job ahead to the end that some day he may drop into the easeful place, and each new duty assumed strengthens his hands. Indeed, an organization chart may be said to be a graphic indication of the way to ease, and therefore a way to decline. It represents a little world in which creatures with ulterior motives are worming and burrowing and plotting and planning and undermining for their own ends, fattening like maggots in a cheese the while. Each advancement in an organization is a personal triumph for some climber gifted with pugnacity and full of self-assertion. Nor are those triumphs hard to win when a climber is ready for battle and the time is ripe, since the fight is one in which a vigorous personality with knowledge stands pitted against an enervated opponent who has lost much of his vital force because of the easeful life he has led. The battle runs strongly in favor of the man fighting up hill because behind him is a long line of other attackers each with an eye fixed upon a place higher up, each secretly eager to help in creating a vacancy, each having done a little preparatory sapping and mining on his own account.

The desperate and pathetic case of the displaced executive forms part of the economic picture that is rarely considered. And his case is desperate and pathetic, because, whatever may have been his virtues when possessed of a deliberate aim, easeful years in an environment where minions leaped to anticipate his wants, and where sycophants and subtle flatterers worked to foster in him a belief in his own courage and dignity and resourcefulness, easeful years, I say, inevitably worked devastating effects. These effects have made the disposed executive utterly useless. Certainly his brother executives are not going to make a place for him. He cannot compete with the vigorous men who have an eye fixed on chairs of ease for their own use. He is physically unable to enter into any part of the economic structure where muscle plays a part. To trick and barter is his only hope, but in that field he can perform no part but the most menial. So your displaced executive goes down the street on the morning after his deposition to enter into an unfamiliar world. When he held office the economic structure seemed to bristle with opportunities. Indeed, he had often expressed himself in the hearing of his subordinates as being amazed at the openings in other concerns which he might fill, were he so disposed; and often he testified to his own short-sighted loyalty and self-denial that kept him at the helm with such patience and single-mindedness. He would have spurned, with angry impatience, the idea that he could not step from one high office to another. But as a deposed man all those openings he dreamed of closed with a snap, and after a few letters—dictated to a scornful hotel stenographer who interested herself not at all in his faulty punctuation, as had the more pliant lady in his office—brought abundant assurances from men in easeful place that things were very well in the world, although openings were scarce, the executive must needs walk abroad a lowly minded man. At the club those who greeted him joyfully as one with a magnetic something within him ceased to yearn for his companionship. With no more domination over material things and shorn of his buying power, he finds himself suddenly unwanted. He becomes "Poor old G!" watched with no favorable eye by those who have charge of hotel lobbies.

I look back to see pathetic instances of high executives in the railroad and the banking world who, being deposed, slipped and slid swiftly into eternal darkness and neglect. One does not give actual names because it would be a refinement of cruelty to say a word or give hint that might visit the sins of the fathers upon the children. But the cases I give are authentic.

Hibbert climbed to position because of exceptional gifts, admirable and otherwise, according to the ethics one chooses to adopt. Still he climbed, He snuggled down comfortably. He knew easeful years, not realizing that ease must bring calamity. His performance was curiously haphazard, and his operations ran into many millions; and when the crash came the noise of it flew over the land with the swiftness of dawn. Now, your man of imagination and energy does not fall into melancholy hopelessness at the age of fifty, but ease kills imagination in spite of all theories about restful absorption and intellectual activity. Any man knows that the brain is most active in the midst of vivid life, and that magical secrets are not revealed when a man lights a cigarette and puts his feet on the desk as prelude to contemplation. Hibbert, so accustomed to quote Charles E. Perkins, president of the Burlington, to the effect that an executive should "Never do, or undertake to do, what can be sufficiently well done by a subordinate," had found subordinates perfectly willing to undertake, so he had, like any parasite, and many executives, lost the use of many of his faculties. When last I saw him, he was sitting comfortably on one of the four chairs close to the door of the Sinton Hotel, his companion an ex-army officer who had been dismissed from the service. Hibbert and I shook hands, and, after a few perfunctory remarks he began to babble of bonds and proclaimed himself a bond salesman, then revealed a tendency to refer to the past with himself in the rôle of victim and martyr. Early in our interivew he discovered that he had left his purse at home, and, laughing at the odd situation, said, "Can you spare me a five?" but said it without that old assurance with which he would have asked for the money as a man asks for a match. There was something almost like heroism in his thinly disguised abjectness. It is not pleasant to meet a man in the tragedy of whose downfall you have played a part.

There is the case of Gray again, a monument of duplicity all compounded of flattery and bullying when he was general manager; forever proclaiming himself a very fountainhead of devotion to his company; one of the sort to fasten upon the original suggestion of a subordinate, and, giving it a wrench and a twist, present it as his own. For eight years he had held fast to his position, and when I took over the property he immediately sought an opportunity to strain after continued blessedness, telling me in an affectedly bright manner of his hopes and aims and aspirations. He flattered, cajoled, made plans, drew blue prints in the air and told of the loyalty to the company and himself that he had inspired in the hearts of the men. He thought not, he said, of private gain, nor of personal glory, but always of the welfare of the company. Such noble souls and great hearts I had learned to suspect. On a minor charge of falsification of accounts being made against him he wept and fled the office forever. For the ensuing six months he wrote letters to directors and bond holders setting forth his belief that I was altogether lacking in intellectual grasp and ability. As for making his own living, once shorn of adventitious trappings he turned to the hawking about of cheap and inferior fountain pens.

Then there was Henson, another executive who had allowed his office to become a sinecure. He was a glad-hearted young man who turned to pleasure with such single-mindedness that he built himself a bungalow with company material, wherein he installed a golden-haired divinity. He was an exceptionally difficult case because of his connections, and because he was a man polite and obliging and amiable who passed everywhere as lovable and beyond suspicion. He entertained his friends on special trains, and went with regularity to church and to lodge, and talked eloquently about patriotism and duty and prosperity. His road's finances were in deplorable state, and a loan which had been made on the day Guiteau shot Garfield, and floated by men long since gone to their rewards, looked more perilous than ever; the expenditure on maintenance was insufficient to preserve the physical integrity of the property; a shaky bridge which had been condemned by the railroad commission daily threatened the safety of a regiment of commuters; but in spite of all those circumstances Henson's monthly expense accounts included membership dues in the country club, as well as club-house debts, and little dinners downtown, and those bills he O.K'd in the manner of a man whose conscience was without flaw. Moreover, he had a three-years contract with the company so refused to resign until a threat of proceedings in open court unnerved him, upon which he signed a blank release in the form of a voucher for two months' pay. Although no more than thirty years of age when deposed he had fallen into desuetude and hung around the state capitol until someone thrust him into a minor political job.

The case of W. is slightly different to any of the foregoing. He stole some $400,000 odd, and went about during the twelve years of stealing a much respected figure, giving no hint of the mystery and anxiety within. During those twelve years other men in easeful positions had failed to find discrepancies, and would have continued to fail to discover them had they been heralded with brass bands and waving banners. W. having fallen from his pedestal at the age of forty became a day laborer, although it is within the knowledge of any well-read man that other men well hardened to fight have faced new battles and won at the same age—Mark Twain, for example, and Walter Scott, and Ericsson.

One other interesting case was that of Ainger, a manager who moved in an atmosphere of authority, a sham-efficient fellow who had worked his way up by strenuous elbowing and a thousand mean clevernesses, much spurred thereto by a socially ambitious wife. He had the good sense to know himself for a poseur who could not keep up his rôle, and hailed the purging much as some criminals welcome their arrest as a relief from the burden of responsibility. He resigned willingly and started a small grocery store in which he seemed happy enough when last I saw him.

Others come to mind who, on being revealed for the frauds that they were, or had become, committed suicide, or fled to far countries and were never heard of again.

I do not recall a single failure among those executives of my acquaintance who possessed open and flexible minds, and who were steadied by a knowledge of literature, or by a love of music, or by a taste for art or the theater. They had in themselves, because of their culture, a certain power of self-renovation. They had a measuring stick by which they could compare values, therefore they were capable of self-discipline and self-control. Their Polaris gave them a direction and they did not waste themselves in aimlessness. But the failures all lived in a transitory world of to-day and were ignorant of that larger world mirrored in literature. They thought to get by with dash and flourish. They sought relaxation in excitements both dangerous and expensive. Above all, they sought ease.

THE AUTHOR WHEN EDITOR OF "REEDY'S MIRROR"

BOOK VI

Merging Horizons

CHAPTER I

Breaking into Literature

1

In a manner of speaking, a sense of uneasiness made me leave the world of economic activity to march toward a new horizon and, after a time, literary fields. A sort of uneasiness possessed me because life seemed a dull performance if man did not live in touch with the natural beauty of the earth. Then there was a marked loneliness. I went hither and yon in trains and automobiles, my affairs being spread over a wide territory, but I knew no friendship worthy of the name. There were men for whom I had tremendous respect, and I saw evidences of similar respect existing between other men, but friendship among men seemed to have gone from the world. There were few to whom I could talk without strain or effort. It was rare to discover anyone who seemed to have contact with or interest in the higher side of knowledge, as with things literary, or musical, or with philosophical questions. The tale of the deep and boundless wisdom that had brought a man to the selling of so many shares of stock and the purchase of so many other shares of stock; the story of a lucky stroke at golf; the relating of how a man's brilliant imagination caused him to make a crushing retort; the enthusiasm of men in regard to the political chances of this man and that; diatribes against wealthy men made by reformers so invariably given to exaggeration—these did not amuse me. But when Judson Harmon in a burst of enthusiasm called my attention, as we rode through southern Ohio, to an autumn hillside at a time when oaks never looked more glorious and when sycamores turn to pale gold, that seemed worth while.

One hot and tedious day I had been with several men in conference, men concerned in the syndicate, fellows who talked money, discussed money at table and when traveling. The day's work being done, some went to their room and played poker or seven-up—it need hardly be said for money. Without the dollar-and-cent stimulus nothing held interest for them. They would bet upon whether the next man passing the door would be fat or thin. They would bet upon which of two raindrops on the window pane would first trickle to the frame. But they were men of higher type, one who was later a nominee for presidential honors in the Republican interest, another an ex-governor, others who have since made names for themselves. For some of them the essential quality of life seemed to lie in ease: they lolled in rockers, or went to sleep, or attended the moving pictures. That morning I had received my copy of *Reedy's Mirror*, so being off duty I took it to my room and sat down to read and to smoke and to enjoy a glass of wine. Then Davis came in. He was of the kind who in business discussions said very little, but what he had said came always like a bright illumination thrown on a dark place. His objections were not of the sort to be explained away. With him you had a feeling that behind what he said was patient and persistent and organized thought. His business camp was opposed to that to which I owed allegiance, but opposed or not it was impossible not to admire his alert habit of mind, his rigorous thinking, his power of concentration, and, above all, his fairness. And there lay *Reedy's Mirror*, an invitation to a discussion of things in general.

What I would first make clear is that Reedy's paper appealed not to the emotions but to the intellect. The editorials, or Reflections as Reedy called them, were opinions reached by a process of serious reasoning. It was a paper free from fanaticism, and from sensationalism, and from popular prejudice. And whenever you found a reader of the journal, though its subscription list did not run higher than the subscription list of Addison's *Spectator*, there you would find a clear-cut man. So Davis and I had a mighty interesting discussion lasting far into the night, not merely literary gossip but free-hearted talk about the complex facts of social and business life. Also out of that came a correspondence, too desultory, that lasted through the years, and the bonds between us, as between myself and other men, have been strengthened by a medium of contact in the shape of my small journal that I started when *Reedy's Mirror* ceased publication. Although *All's Well* was not started until nearly three years after that time, my journal had its earliest inception that night, for I said that should *Reedy's Mirror* ever cease, I would do what I could to hold its readers together.

I repeat that what I most deplored during those years of successful activity was the absence of true companionship among men of affairs. Having entered the economic world I seemed to have closed the door upon something which had made me glad and grateful to meet men. The very letters I received from associates in the business world were cold and distant as if the writers of them feared that an appearance of friendship might mean loss of dignity. There was no end of expensive hospitality, there were generosities, there were long hours during train rides and auto rides when I sat side by side or face to face with men that I liked, but always there were stone walls of separation and very little earnest enjoyment. And in many of the homes of successful men it was very apparent that whatever companionship once existed between men and their wives had long since become diluted. The very fact of success kept men more and more occupied with other men and away from their homes, and the women turned more and more to social affairs. Children of age were sent away to boarding schools, or, being too young for them, found attractions away from home because commercial interests worked one way to disrupt the family as a social and educational institution; and churches and schools, acting in opposition to the money makers, worked another way to do the same thing. To specify more clearly, there were the attractions offered by motion-picture companies, and to counteract those attractions, the people of the church were busy organizing ice-cream festivals, and lectures, and moral and educational motion-picture entertainments. The family an educational and social institution stood between the devil and the deep blue sea. Then as the automobile began to cut a figure, immature folks already partly out of hand and knowing almost nothing of discipline ran further afield until it began to seem that a sense of the all-importance of conduct bade fair to be lost.

I repeat that during those last years of railroad work, and as managing head of the syndicate to buy non-paying roads, I was eating out my own heart because of a lack of congenial company. Sometimes in business I mixed with men without suspecting them of intellectual pursuits. That was almost the case with Kessler, an expert accountant. By the narrowest of chances I discovered him to be interested in economics and literature, and so we had a good time and did what business we had to do the better for the relaxation. Such was actually the case with Haigh, with whom I had much to do. But had he and I at any time slipped from the discussion of the values of bonds to a discussion of Beethoven we would have suspected ourselves of a sort of infidelity. I looked upon him as an industrious man of prudent wisdom, quite unconscious of the world of beautiful things. I distinctly remember one afternoon when we rode many miles together while he told me of his business troubles, I turned a half-impatient ear because my mind was full of a Paderewski concert that I had attended the evening before. But five years later I went to Aeolian Hall, in New York, to hear a young pianist, and there, a little in front of me, sitting with his cheek on his hand, his brow slightly knit, I saw the man I had supposed always to be more interested in finance and business than in anything else. It was Haigh, the man with whom I had talked of ties and ballast, of bond interest and notes, all for a purpose other than the heartless purpose of business. And his purpose, I then saw, was the training of his son Andrew, the slight figure on the platform who was playing Dohnanyi and the Bach-Liszt fugue; and among the listeners were writers, poets, artists, men and women of culture.

Yet there were men of highest type with whom I came into close touch. There was Judson Harmon, once of President Cleveland's cabinet, and twice governor of Ohio, but later the senior member of a law firm with which I had much to do. We talked of books, travels, of experiences, never of politics. I found him to be a noble soul with a great heart and honest convictions, and I was confused with astonishment when I found men denouncing him as the tool of capitalists and corporations when his name was mentioned for candidate for presidential nomination. But Judson Harmon's views were his own, and he held the structure of the modern economic world as not accidental but as a result of evolution, wherefore capitalism needed no more justification in argument than any biological phenomenon. Capitalism, as he held, was actually bringing order out of chaos. But he was never guilty of any shallow optimism of a sort to encourage belief that by destiny a nation would march to star-crowned heights. It was, he held, the duty of men to practice self-discipline to the end that each individual might be a source of order in his immediate vicinity and thus school himself to bring reason to bear on social and political affairs. Judson Harmon was a knightly soul.

Another man, a near neighbor, was Herbert S. Bigelow, president of the Ohio Constitutional convention; a single-taxer leaning to socialism—a strange trend because the majority of single-taxers inclined to a sturdy individualism. Bigelow I found to be a man of generous emotion who had suffered calumny and persecution from a thousand tongues and hands; a man of great good will, entirely disinterested in his fight for reform, eager and earnest, self-forgetful and devoted. His devotion included his own family as well as the causes he held close to heart. I think of him as I always saw him at work in his garden at Fruithill, square-shouldered, well-muscled and bright-eyed, intensely alive in discussion. But I see him another way, pale of face and on the verge of nervous prostration, bruised and beaten, tired about the eyes and unable to speak above a whisper. That was after, and as a result of one of those outrages perpetrated by some of those depraved hoodlums that now and then disgrace our attempt at civilization. Bigelow's sin had been that he dared to say in public that which he held to be true, and, fighting for the completest justice for all, he had flung himself into the cause of the working people during a strike. He had opposed America's entry into the war, he had denounced the methods of the propagandists. Because we had sat together, talked together, walked and ridden together and argued together I felt sure of his disinterestedness and sincerity, of his modesty and lack of conceit, and I still feel sure of the man. But others did not. And there were others who hung on the fringe of the smugly successful ever ready to do deeds of shame for a price. So plots were hatched.

One evening Bigelow, as he turned to go up an unfrequented street, a short cut to the hall where he was to lecture, found himself stopped by three men who told him that he would have to go with them to the police officials to give an outline of his proposed lecture, or some such matter. Unsuspecting and being invited, he entered a closed automobile that stood there, and was driven away. But before they had gone far, one of the men clapped handcuffs on him and at the same time another put a black bag over his head. Then, as he related the story, he heard sounds that led him to believe that he was being taken across the bridge into Kentucky, so he knew he was being kidnapped. "Of course," said Bigelow to me thoughtfully, "there was nothing to do but to sit still. Once one of them put a muzzle of a revolver, or what I imagined to be that, to my head and said something threatening. I could tell after hearing the rumbling as we crossed the suspension bridge, by listening to the street sounds, that we were passing through Covington, and the thought struck me that I might be murdered or thrown into the river. It seemed hours long, that ride. Presently the car stopped, and I was taken out, still handcuffed, and when I was allowed to see again I was blinded by the white, glaring lights of many automobiles arranged in a semi-circle and focussed on me, so I could see nothing. But I knew by the brilliancy of the lights that the cars were high-powered ones. I heard shoutings, and the high-pitched laughing of women."

Masked men took him and bound him to a tree, stripped him to the waist, then lashed him with whips the while a man with a deep bass voice chanted, "In the name of the women and children of outraged Belgium!" They laid on their lashes until he fainted from exhaustion and fear and over-excitement. When things became distinguishable again, two men drew near, one of whom drenched him with coal oil. But the automobiles were then starting away, some of them wheeling close to the man tied to the tree to give the women a near sight of the victim. "I heard the laugh of young women several times," he said. "Then one of the men told me that though I would be loosed I must stand looking at the tree for ten minutes, otherwise I would never see the light of day again. So he left me and so I stood stock still, not daring to look around. . . . All the rest is confused. I had not the slightest notion where I was nor where could be a road to town. But presently I did stumble on a road and went on until I came to a village without a sign of light in any house. So I knew it to be deep night. Presently I saw one dim light in a window and found my way there, though at the door I was almost powerless to knock. You must know that somehow I had spasms of fear, suspecting that those who had whipped me might still have me in sight. The men who were capable of laying a plot like that might also lay further spiteful plots, and how was I to know that this solitary light was not the part of the mischief? But it was not. The door was opened by a man who I saw to be a Catholic priest, and the good soul was all kindness and sympathy. He took me to his room and bathed me, and when day came be brought a doctor who dressed my cuts and bruises and presently took me to the hospital."

That piece of brutality, one of many in those days of popular hysteria, was seized upon by Bigelow's supporters as evidence of the lengths to which capitalism would go to support what they took to be a dying economic condition. The outrage had no more to do with capitalism than had later Ku Klux Klan outrages to do with religion, though superficial-minded men could not see it that way.

2

One day I received a letter from a financier in reply to a business report I had made, and a sentence in it gave me a thrill of joy, the more because I had so long been bottled up with no way in which to express myself as I yearned to do. The passage ran in part, ". . . and, let me say, your report gave me the first real knowledge of the situation. It was so clearly put, so well written with no apology made for presenting the truth. . . ."

I had not suspected any gift of ready utterance in me; indeed, I am not convinced to my own satisfaction that I am gifted in that direction because everything that I write must needs be corrected and changed, and my letters and manuscripts are a mass of interlineations and insertions that have always seemed to me to offer abundant testimony of my own defects. However, I had formed a notion of what a report or a letter should be and my guide was a writer and a thinker and an independent soul whose pleasure seemed to be to give pleasure; his name, William Marion Reedy; his paper, *Reedy's Mirror*, now defunct. But the only writing for publication I had done were the story sent to the *Youth's Companion* and the solitary article on the evolution of transportation for the *Nation*, and a few short reviews written for *The Public* on books of business economics. But into letters written to Cunninghame Graham, and to W. H. Hudson, the naturalist, I had put something of my experiences, and Hudson had urged me to write for publication. Then Reedy, becoming other than a voice, swam into my world. He sent me a copy of the first edition of Mencken's *The American Language*, and asked me to review it, which I did. He wrote a letter in which he urged me to drop book-reviewing as a fruitless piece of business and to try my hand at imaginative work based on fact. So I was all athrill with hope and resolves, and sent to him a poem about the moon, and a short story. The moon he flung at me, bidding me try no more poetry, telling me that "Lady Moon would not talk that way"; but the story he printed and praised, whereupon I told him I would be happy if ever I saw stories of mine in school readers, for that was indeed my highest aim. The naked truth is that praise and commendation sounded to me like mockery, or something very near it, and even when Edward O'Brien, in his annual gathering of tales, first reprinted a story of mine, I was in no way elated nor felt assured that I had a foot on the ladder I wished to climb. Back came Reedy with the prediction that if I did not lack energy and courage and industry I would certainly live to see my own tales in school readers "listed with tales by Irving and Dickens and Hawthorne," which struck me as being a blessedness I could never hope to attain.

Thereafter I saw a new horizon and began to plan a way to it. What, I wondered, were the essentials of good writing, suppose it to be taken for granted that there is a sort of survival of the fit in fictional literature. In the endeavor to discover, I made a chart, using a roll of engineer's squared paper and marking it off into spaces, each space to represent a year, and charting from the year one to the year nineteen hundred and twenty. Next I wrote the name of every English and American writer in proper place as to time, regardless of the writer's fame or lack of fame, including hundreds of names long since forgotten. A horizontal line marked the writer's span of life; as for example, the line for Joseph Rodman Drake would run from the year 1795 to the year 1820, but the line would be slightly thickened at the five-year period of the writer's literary activity. Those lines were in colored inks, red for poets, black for novelists, violet for historians, green for essayists, blue for philosophers, yellow for dramatists, and so on. The chart being done revealed an army of men forgotten by the world, many almost forgotten, others remembered by one book, others who seemed to stay in the memories of men by a sort of scholastic convention. Then came the salient question as why some writers have lived while others sank into oblivion, for an examination of some of the forgotten men revealed the fact that they did not lack the power to write well, or to do all that the schools demanded in the way of grammar, or to produce detail with fidelity, or to tell a good story well.

A partial light came to me when, looking through Darwin's *Voyage of the "Beagle,"* and remembering Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego and Tenerife, and noting the fidelity of the patient investigator in his descriptions of places and things seen, I realized that the reading of his books must mean a direct enlargement of experience for those who had not traveled. In the field of economics I found exactly that enlargement of experience in the works of Henry George. I found it in Hudson, in Thoreau, in Bunyan, in Irving. So, in a certain class of descriptive book, what I looked for, as I saw it, was enlargement of experience. That must be a prime qualification if the book should hope to live. That precluded conventionalities in representation, such as the stage Irishman, the romantic cowboy, the square-jawed and square-chinned American youth, the baby-faced pretty girl of the magazine cover, the types so hackneyed of Ouida, Rider Haggard, Wright, Gunter, Chambers, Vizetelly, John Strange Winter, and numberless others.

At a leap it came to me that when I remembered the name of some particular author with keen delight, there also came to mind one or more of his creations. I could not think of Irving without thinking also of Oliver Goldsmith; the name Thackeray brought visions of Costigan and Foker and Major Pendennis and Becky Sharp; a thought of Jack Falstaff or Portia meant a thought of Shakespeare. Robinson Crusoe made so deep an impression that he overshadowed his creator almost as though Defoe had given his own vigor of mind and vigor of body to his creation. Those fictional characters and a hundred more were very real to me, far more real than many historical characters in biographies. They stood clear-cut. They were alive. Their very thoughts glowed. I knew their passions, and prejudices and convictions. I saw that when one such character was brought into contact with another character equally forceful, or was conceived as in contact with a group of subordinate characters, action must result naturally just as within my own knowledge and experience action had grown out of impact with another. There, then, lay one of the secrets of literary excellence. Authors were worthy inasmuch as they had created characters that became as evident to the reader as if the reader stood in their presence. Their works were meritorious as the action grew out of the collision of character upon character, and as the author truly depicted the various aspects of contemporary life. On the other hand, authors were mere idle chatterers if they depended upon a plot with lay figures by way of characters going through a set of motions, nor would a book live, though it might enjoy a skyrocket career, where dependence was placed on plot. The world had interest in characters, it had nothing except a passing interest in shadows and puppets that creaked and jerked and wabbled when the operator pulled the wires. So it seemed that the world would remember the genuine and that there was a winnowing process at work; and if the world was held for a little while by the sham, yet the sham could make no lasting impression.

Presently I met Reedy and Frank Putnam and the editor of the *Post Dispatch* at a lunch, and afterwards Reedy and I sat and talked. You must see Reedy as a man of kindliness, all sincerity, essentially a civilized man. Had he been dressed in the habit of a Benedictine I would have been ready to declare him the living prototye of Carlyle's Abbot Samson—there was that solidity for justice and fair play about him. You must see him as a man weighing in the neighborhood of two hundred pounds, about five feet eight inches in height, brown of eye, his hair black and graying. The intensity of his own nature led him to injudiciousness, for he was the kind of man that Robert Burns must have been. Privately, I resented hearing him addressed as "Billy." He would eat in good-fellowship, drink in good-fellowship, stay up late of nights in good-fellowship. Consequently he was over-wrought and over-worked; he was a man too over-useful for his own good. But to listen to him was like hearing music. He was not one of that sort called a brilliant conversationalist, the sort to monopolize the talk and ride a subject to death. He conversed. His phrases sometimes flashed like jewels. He was lucid, accurate, orderly. He was cultured; he was logical, forcible, to the point. He said memorable things about living men, such as that he believed Dr. Frederick A. Cook to have been to the North Pole and that the day would come when Cook would be vindicated; that he could not see Conrad as the great contemporary writer and that if Conrad would forget himself and his style and think only of his story, the reading of him would not be such hard work; that John L. Hervey, who was editor of *The Horse Review*, was one of the most discriminating readers of his acquaintance and that his articles signed Alliteraricus (this gives away a secret closed until now) were gems that the *Mirror* was proud to have. When I told him of my chart, and the creation of character and how I held the correct depiction of life and manners to be literary fundamentals, we went down to Melschiemer's cellar and ordered beer and talked literature for two hours on end. That a man of such acquirements, of such literary knowledge, of such intensity of convictions should have written nothing but his weekly reflections, a couple of prefaces, and a short essay, and should have devoted his whole life to the encouragement of others, seemed little short of marvelous. Yet the list of names of those he has so encouraged reads like a roll call of living literary lions. There were Edna St. Vincent Millay, Sara Teasdale, Mary Austin, Carl Sandburg, Witter Bynner, Edgar Lee Masters, Orrick Johns, Louis Untermeyer, Margaret Widdemer, Manual Komroff, Harry Merton Lyon, Silas Bent, Alexander Harvey, Zoë Akins, Babette Deutsch, and many more who found an audience in the *Mirror*, some their first audience. There were young artists too. Reedy was a revealer. He was an eager discoverer. His joy was to give joy. His enthusiastic, energetic passion for literature kept him busy looking for makers of literature. He was beloved by all who knew him. If I made a comparison at all it would be to compare him with Charles Lamb. In both men there was a quaint pleasantry, a quality of scholarly humor, a carelessness for fame, a determination never to be recreant to the calling of letters, an evidence of living on a high plane of thought and feeling, but a reaching down from that high plane into the sphere of common man. In both there were honesty, courage, good will, disinterestedness. Had Charles Lamb written a History of English Literature that reached up to and included his own time, and had Reedy written a continuation of the same work from Lamb's time to his own, with American Literature also dealt with, the Anglo-Saxon world would have a book of eternal value.

During all those years of travel and adventure and experience there had been stored in me thoughts and ideas and memories of which I was hardly aware. It became forced upon me that I must write about them. I did not have any selfish desire to see my name in print. Indeed, the stories that I wrote for *Reedy's Mirror* were sent under a nom-de-plume and it was Reedy himself who made me use my own name. Then a foolish doubt possessed me and I feared that Reedy might be printing my stuff to compliment me because of friendship that had grown up between us. So I sent two of the stories to H. L. Mencken, who published the *Smart Set*, and back came two letters, one from Mencken and one from Nathan, saying that I was the kind of man that they wanted to encourage. They printed my tales. But even then I had no faith in my destiny, so little indeed that I found myself on the verge of going to Mexico, to the mining town in El Oro, where a position as general superintendent had been offered me. And there I would have gone had it not been for the burden of a problem, one which I took seriously and seemed to be taking more seriously alone.

That problem was the problem of my children's education. I refer again to what I have said about the decline of the family as a social and educational institution. It came to me with all the force of a blow that my five children were growing up, and, except for seeing them at the week-end, I was a stranger to them. But I saw more in a confused way. I saw that there was danger of the children making individual pleasure the guide of conduct. There was too much dependence upon the automobile, upon social functions, upon commercialized amusements. There was a taking for granted that the mere fact of going to school would solve problems of character, would automatically make for discipline, would ensure a taste for knowledge. Schools, I knew, could do none of those. They could not so much as make for efficiency and power of concentration because a foolish curriculum necessitated short cuts on the part of the children. Then outside the school there was a blatancy forced on the children, for those were war times, and pasted on walls and wind shields were streamers that read "To Hell with the Kaiser," and "God damn the Kaiser"; there were hideous caricatures of the Hohenzollern with a legend printed across it that read "You may throw mud at this." And not only was the suggestion acted upon, but improved upon, so that many a window pane, upon which the poster had been pasted by unseen hands of business and professional rivals, was shattered. That sort of childishness on the part of hysterical people was very rampant in those days. Schoolbooks were destroyed or mutilated; there was talk of abolishing the German language; the mere waving of a flag by someone on a stage was supposed to arouse fighting blood; self-control as a virtue seemed on the edge of disappearance. It seemed to me that the most thoughtless could at least dimly see to what all that must lead.

Obviously the man with children had a duty other than money making. I had seen, in my own experience, that the physical or material world was no very difficult one to fight. But there were other worlds. There was a world moral and a world intellectual. Money, pleasure and position were easily gained or cultivated. It was not so easy to cultivate one's self. Strength of body and control of hand came easily. Self-discipline came hard. . . . I wrestled mightily with the problem and could not help but come back to the decision that I must give up everything in the way of money making and turn to character making. The family would have to be turned into a social and educational institution because education as left to the schools seemed to have become very much like a social affair. As for the church—for there were some slight bonds of allegiance to the Episcopal denomination (though I very rarely attended church, except to play the organ occasionally)—that struck me as being very much like a social organization from which nothing at all could be demanded or expected in actual achievement, when achievement was taken to mean the aiming to model human character upon an ideal character.

Suddenly I saw a solution, and in seeing the general scheme of things numberless cogs fitted together with a click. The sincere study of worth-while literature! There was the answer. The young mind seizes upon an ideal character and imitates it. In my youth I had tried to model myself upon an hundred or more fictional characters, good, bad and indifferent. I had found righteousness and heroism in Hereward the Wake and in Danton and in John Ball and in Paul Jones. I had burned to alleviate suffering with Damien, and to explore with Livingstone, and to stand for liberty and right with Lincoln; to be independent with Robinson Crusoe and Thoreau; to be noble and excellent with Jack Oakhurst; and to be strong and fearless with John Ridd. I was a bundle of qualities, theoretically, taken from warriors, poets, kings, patriots, outlaws, barbarians, peasants and masters of men.

Then Fate took a hand. From Reedy I received a telegram one day asking me to take charge of his *Mirror* while he went to California, and on the heels of the telegram came a letter in his hand that showed me an estimate of myself far above my merits, for I knew myself to be a small thing and poor compared with his written opinion. But I welcomed the opportunity, resigned my position and went to St. Louis. And being so far west, I went further and found a valley in the Ozarks in which lay a neglected farm. So I bought the farm, sold my house and much machinery of the household, shipped the family to its new home and started a march to a new horizon. I would, I decided, leave money making and the mastery of men to do a little mental cultivation. I would write books. I would reach out somehow in the endeavor to touch hands with men and women of personality because a man's interest must extend beyond himself. But above all I would march over and beyond that sixth horizon. I would, I decided, trim my sails for ports I could never hope to reach. The seventh horizon should be the establishment of character and personality in my children. It would be the turning of their eye in the direction to an end that presently they might find their own way. I would make an experiment in discipline and docility and thoroughness. I would see if it was possible to attune life to a fine key by acquaintance with literature, music and art, because in those the best of the human race had expressed thoughts and aspirations. As for ways and means, Reedy and I privately and tentatively planned a glorified *Mirror* in which we were to be co-workers in a way to be presently decided. But all that went crashing on the morning of July 29, 1920, when a telegram came from James H. Barry of San Francisco, saying that Reedy had died.

"At lunch," wrote one of the party in San Francisco, "with Mr. Barry, his family and a few friends, Reedy's mood was felicitous. He was almost himself again and talked with quiet assurance. . . . The evening was pleasant, the sky overspread with clouds still flushed. He enjoyed those hours. He had written a couple of letters after lunch, which he was anxious should be mailed promptly. Both were to St. Louis; one addressed to Ebro was written in pencil as he sat outside, and the other in ink at his desk."

Now "Ebro" was the name by which Reedy addressed me, and here is a copy of the letter. I omit the names of persons, because it seems to be something like a breach of confidence to include them. The important thing is the way in which Reedy, less than an hour from his end, put heart and energy into his letter.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.,
JULY 28, 1920.

DEAR EBRO:

Just got your two letters. You're doing splendidly. I mean this most sincerely. Your last paper is most choice. Indeed, I'm ashamed that I crowd you out so much. Miss M. tells me that you roll in subscriptions famously and an occasional ad. You're an Admirable Crichton—so you are. All you touch you give life to. Too bad you are not enough native to take a crack at some local affairs; but, hell, it's the dull season in local affairs and they can wait. I wish I could get your brains and energy to work for the *Mirror* in all departments, but it would tie you down, and you're a bird that must have free wing. I'd like to turn you loose on the New York publishers for advertising, for example. But we'll talk of that later on when I get back. I deeply appreciate the splendid service you've given me and are giving. I'll be your debtor forever. *Dust to Dust* is bully good stuff. You'll have a great book soon. Then hurrah for the best seller that you'll be.

I see a letter in reply to your editorial on Cox. If that letter writer S. S. is right, I'd like to know the details. I can't support Harding or Christenson or Debs, so I must go for Cox and I'd like to give him the benefit of what S. says if it's true, and to make him some votes among our kind of Liberals. If you can get the dope that will justify this I'll be glad. Write S. and find out—that is, if you're not so antagonistic to Cox that you can't abide him at all. I don't want you to do anything against your grain.

I want you to like my friend T. He's the salt of the earth and the best friend I ever had in the world, though he agrees with me on hardly anything political. I'm devotedly fond of him. Another friend of mine and T.'s that you should like is Mr. R. S. C. engineer, contractor, noble-souled fellow. They are palpably persons both, as real and as loyal as even M., on whom may all gods in all heavens shower benison. She writes me things of you that quite make feel me jealous of you.

Don't be too hard on——. He's full of thought. Thinks he looks like

Rodin's Thinker, has psychological theory and all that. You can jolly him along, but don't disturb him in his *Wahrheit und Dichtung* mood. M. has him well in hand I think. You and she together can give him impetus and direction.

I'm not feeling so damned good, but for God's sake don't tell M. It's nothing but a little shortness of wind now 'n agin. I'll be all right in a short while.

I've had the loveliest time at the home of Mrs. DeMille, daughter of Henry George, and his best work. She's some little woman I tell you, with certain striking similitudes to A.

I'm sorry I hadn't time to write you before. I hope all the family are well and that your engagement with *Reedy's* doesn't shatter the family circle too hopelessly. You've earned your ease, but I don't know how you're going to get it in Arkansas.

So again I want to say how grateful I am, how I like the spirit and variety of your work. The correspondence you carry on would crush an ordinary person. Don't waste time on a lot of 'em. I can't stand K. any more. But that's between you and me.

So here's all affectionate greetings to you, and thanks and thanks and again thanks.

Sincerely,
REEDY.

. . . I like the book review idea of L. Jesus! C. J. F., if I had the dough we'd get out the weekly of the world—and do it without working ourselves to death—You and Me and A. M., to whom as to yourself my most respectful and fervently friendly salutations.

So there went crashing airy castles built. Reedy's widow would have none of the *Mirror*, which must needs have died with its spirit gone. For three or four weeks I stayed in St. Louis clearing things up, then went to Arkansas.

CHAPTER II

A Free Fantasia

I

We went to northwest Arkansas to live on a run-down farm that I had bought, which was situated three miles from the university town of Fayetteville. There came a time of vivid activity, what with repairing the old house and building a new one, with fencing the land, ditching and draining, plowing and planting, trimming the orchard and putting in a vineyard, gathering together sheep and cattle and horses. But, whether because of my ignorance of farming processes, or because of general agricultural conditions, or because of expensive tastes, or because of a mixture of all those, after a couple of years it became manifest that farming meant early financial ruin. Therefore I turned to writing as a means of support, of which more later. If I had not turned to writing I would have turned to something else, to general contracting, or to operating a line of motor cars, or to sheep raising on a considerable scale after renting surrounding vacant farms, of which there were a few.

But, having abandoned the idea of planting for revenue, we planted for amusement. We made flower beds and grew flowers, made a lawn, a tennis court, a basket-ball ground, a rifle range. Now, when people come a-visiting and note the rayed splendor of roses and iris and honeysuckle, when they see the diaphanous spring foliage of elms and sycamores and the bloom of dogwood, when they see great tree trunks that run up a dozen feet or more before a branch begins, when they mark the absence of jungle wildness and hear the songs of birds at sunrise, some of them express a wonder how it came about that we had the good fortune to pick upon so pleasant a place for a home.

They overlook the fact that although beauty burns like a fire, spreading ever wider and more glorious, the early flames of it have to be fanned with care. There is a choir of birds, it is true, but to protect it there had to be unpleasantness with the chasing away of foolish fellows carrying guns whose idea of hunting is the slaying of a rabbit or the killing of a squirrel or a rare bird. There is beauty at Gayeta, but to gain it there had to be fighting, and an unceasing resistance to invasion; fighting against the destroying part of Nature, fighting against inclement weather, fighting against those who harbor worthless hounds, fighting against well-meaning but mistaken people who would disrupt home life and home comfort to satisfy the needs of that narrow society which is nothing more than the banding together of people tired of themselves and without hope or aim.

But the pleasure of building! That pleasure, never ceasing, was made possible by the fact that I was my own architect and started with the idea of a central fireplace in a large room; other requirements had to accommodate themselves to that. Certainly both prudence and economy dictate the employment of an architect, still an architect means finality, and finality implies a sort of immurement, and immurement and development cannot go together. Besides, how shall a man of spirit accept the taste of another? How, in the planning of the house, shall provision be made for infinite vista, or for beauty that is not but shall be, or for that which may be revealed in the course of time?

And it is well to remember that the man who builds his own house, and is lucky enough to be in no hurry, and is of the sort to find something stimulating in adding new rooms as convenience dictates and the purse allows, can never sit down in lazy contentment. A man gets a deeper consciousness of his own liberty when he can, at a notion, put a new window to give on the west and so have a sunset view where before stood a blank wall. He gets a taste of the full and high enjoyment of living when he finds it possible to use saw and hammer to the end that he can look at a landscape while he takes his bath; and there must be self-assertion of a sort to change environment if a man is to retain health and youthful vigor.

2

I had not been long in the hills before I came to the conclusion, from which I am not to be shaken without a mass of new evidence, that the political rhetoricians who shout about a high standard of living are talking without knowledge. Neither the back-hills farmer nor the office worker in the city who eats at automats and at chain restaurants ever fare as well as did the plainsmen of Argentine, or as did the shearers of sheep in Patagonia, or as do the lumbermen of Canada. When I turn to Holinshed's account of Elizabethan England, which tells how it was hard in those days if a farmer, in a year's tenancy, did not lay aside enough to pay his rental for a year or two, how he ate beef and pork and mutton and fish and game, how he had his cakes and ale, how his women wore good homespun, how he went a-fairing and enjoyed the market days, then I cannot but help compare Holinshed's picture with what I know to be the case now and here. In any city I discover that a slice of meat brought to me is insufficient to satisfy my appetite, and is certainly less in quantity than the first helping that I give the slimmest eater at my own table. As to the countryside, I have had, working for me, young men who hardly knew the taste of honest fat beef, who never ate mutton, who in pig-killing season subsisted largely on pork. They eat chicken and sweet potatoes, but what they eat is not of prime quality; that is sent to market. They do not wear honest wool but are dressed month in and month out in overalls. Many of them live in houses compared to which my poultry house is luxurious. They rarely taste butter, rarely drink anything but milk from which has been extracted by machine every globule of butter fat. They have neither books, nor pictures, nor music. They cut and sell their timber for firewood, but for so low a price that it pays me to buy from them and reserve my own. Their calves can never become lusty steers because the luckless creatures are often fed on skimmed milk, the cream being sent to markets. Their children are undernourished, the diet furnished being largely composed of sweet potatoes, molasses, commonest bacon and a hurried baked dough miscalled biscuit. Of their amusement I am not qualified to talk instructively because I do not understand. Entertainment centers about the schoolhouse; entertainers are itinerant preachers of corybantic sort and a fanatic woman evangelist or two. Therefrom originate strange ideas to form a quaint mosaic of belief, religious and otherwise.

Which reminds me: Parish, who helped with the house carpentering, gave us one day his theory on the inner cause of the World War, a tale he had heard from a female evangelist, and which he implicitly believed. It had to do with a mysterious "stone of stones," to recover which from its holder he, I am convinced, would have thrown down his tools and gone forth on command as knights sallied out to look for the Grail. But first something of the old man's outlook upon things in general may be gained when I tell you that he expressed himself as much astonished because Scott Peer, a young Englishman who had been in the country for ten weeks, had learned to talk the language of America.

"What does England intend to do about the stone of stones?" asked Parish.

"What was this stone of stones?" said Scott.

At the putting of the question it was interesting to see the serenity that took possession of Parish. He took his tobacco wad from his mouth and set it on a board for later disposal. He removed his hat. He laid his hammer aside, then he tucked the corner of his apron into his waist strap. During the recital that followed he twisted the other corner of his apron into a hard knot, then untwisted it again, and kept on doing that. The trick seemed to assist exposition and to give him the confidence that Theodore Dreiser seems to gain when he folds and pleats his handkerchief.

"They tell me that it all started up with this here Moses when he went to see God on the mountain of the Law," said Parish. "Moses didn't have two stones like they say, but three."

He paused in his discourse and looked around for objections.

"Let it be agreed that he had three," said Scott. "Go on."

"Now Moses he had right smart of a temper so he got plumb mad when he come down with them stones and seen what was doin' with the children of Israel worshippin' this here Golden Calf. He threw the stones at the calf; two of 'em broke to smithereens. Plumb ruined they was. This here calf, let me tell you . . ."

"Never mind the calf," said Scott, who knew the man's wandering tendency.

"Well, like I'm tellin', two had wrote on 'em these Ten Commandments, and the other, what he kep', had on it this here secret of secrets. Get that and you know all there is to know. Now Moses, he knew. He had a mind to tell 'em, but when he seen the way they was cuttin' up with that there Golden Calf, takin' the ornery and leaving the real stuff to go, like Esau swappin' his birthright for a bait of vittles as you might say, then Moses he give the stone of stones to Aaron tellin' him to keep it, which he did, and give it to them kings. In the Book you can read about 'em. So it came down from one to another, this one givin' it to him and that one takin' it from him. On that stone's the great secret and the number of the Beast. When the Germans got it of course the Kaiser he got it. That's how the war started. The King of England he got to learn about it from some Jew in his gov'ment whose name I disremember, that's why Ford don't have no use for Jews, so worked up the Alleys on his side. We went in with the English Alleys because President Wilson, he got to know about the stone and wanted to keep it in Washington. So there was the war. . . . Who's got it now? Why, the Kaiser; he kept it and he's still got it. He'll pass it on and there'll be another war to get it. They tell me that you can read about it in the Book of Revelations."

The story being done, Parish smiled the smile of a man sure of his facts, which is by no means the smile of a man who seeks cheap popular applause. Manifestly it would be foolish to contradict him, or to argue with him or to try to confound him. And, in no desire to make him a clown for our entertainment, but rather in a spirit of inquisitiveness, we pumped him for other curious beliefs. We learned, among other things, that the set of the Milky Way indicated the direction of the prevailing wind. "It blew the star dust," he said, "for the wind began high in the heavens and lowered as it blew." We were told that a horse hair thrown into a pond would become a snake; that the drops of gum oozing from a pine board would turn to bedbugs; that the thin crescent of the full moon foretold wet or dry weather according as the curve lay to cut the water or otherwise; that a snake, though chopped into pieces, would not die until sunset; that the cream of intelligent humanity went into politics; that the insects called "devil's horses" were deadly poisonous; that a man who had read many books must needs be wise; that planting and fence building, and house shingling and even the cutting of one's hair should be done according to the phases of the moon. The truth of all these and much more he held to be indisputable. Still, he was truthful, he was honest in his day's work, always cheerful, given to singing in raucous voice, and he never sought approbation for what he was paid to do. So we got along very well and his beliefs or disbeliefs were his personal affair that concerned the rest of us not at all. Be it said, the information Parish gave us was peppered with innocuous expletives, customary in the hill country. "By Ned!" "Well, I'll swan!" "Dad blamed!" "By Jiminy!" "Dog gorn!"—they are the samples of the language used under emotional stress. The luridities of plainsmen or sailors or soldiers when any of those lose their proud control are unknown to the hills people as they are unknown to the average cowboy. But then the forebears of this folk of which Parish was a good average specimen were those who, a couple of centuries ago, had set Sir Charles Grandison on a pedestal. They can be imagined as speculating upon the propriety of doing certain things on Sunday, reflecting, quite in the manner of the proper Sir Charles, "I am afraid I must borrow of the Sunday some of the hours of my journey; but visiting the sick is an act of mercy." The names of these people tell of their English stock, Jones, Williams, Moore, Holland, Bachelor, Reed, Wilson, Strong, Stout, Davis, Watkins. That so mild a people would walk their Sabbath day's journey to hear a vulgar preacher whose heart was big with hate, whose denunciations of sin smacked of licentious sensuality, whose warnings savored of ferocity, a creature emphatic and gloomy and hortatory and hollow, has always left me in a mood of blank astonishment. So also sometimes their viewpoint of right and wrong astonishes me.

For a case of astonishing viewpoint there is this. Thinking to improve the cattle stock in the immediate neighborhood, I bought a Jersey bull and let it be known publicly that the cost of service would be slightly higher than the cost of scrub stock, though lower than the charge made by the agricultural department of the state university. But my bull languished in the pasture, for there existed a deep-rooted opinion that scrub stock would weather conditions better than what one man called "strained blood." To mend matters my son chalked up on the notice board behind the mail box this legend:

REGISTERED JERSEY BULL SERVICE

and waited for the rush of trade, but it did not come. A few days passed before I went to the mail box to find the advertisement changed to read

REGISTERED JERSEY MAIL SERVICE

Wondering at what seemed to be a post-office connotation I sought advice. My informant, a moon-faced man, preacher-teacher-farmer by calling, enlightened me.

"I done it," he said, and looked intensely miserable. "That word. 'Tisn't decent. . . . We say male, or cow-critter, or gentleman cow. We don't ever say——" His mouth framed itself to the forbidden word.

Thus were my eyes unsealed. Also islands in my dark sea of unconsciousness were brightly lit when I learned that the teacher in a country school had been scolded and chidden and threatened and most thoroughly scared because of a charge of circulating indecent literature that had been made against her by the trustees, the offensive matter being several numbers of the *National Geographic Magazine* that I had given the school, and, more particularly, an illustrated article describing some Pacific Island out of the ordinary run of steamers.

We started a debating society at the school, and the moon-faced gentleman with notions about the language of venery sat as president. I think that they debated bolshevism, or prohibition, or the rights of man; it does not matter much because the arguments shifted, as arguments will, and came to a sort of wrangle about the excellence or otherwise of Jeffersonian democracy and states rights. But the moon-faced gentleman mistrusted any difference of opinion as destructive. It would be better, he held, for men to hide their preferences and their differences of opinion. "When we debate again," he said, in a pleading and fatherly way, "let us debate about something on which we do not differ." Whereupon arose one of the school trustees and delivered himself brilliantly in these words:

"Let me give a subject for the next debate. It's this: What's this here country coming to? You take the negative and I'll take the affirmative."

Then, mindful of parliamentary forms of procedure, the moon-faced gentleman said, "You-all heard the motion. If there's no objection we'll call it unanimous." Thus simply were unpleasant scenes avoided, and the moon-faced gentleman sat down, a musing quietist.

I do not clutch at a few insignificant facts to hold a simple people up to ridicule. They are a good folk and kindly. My purpose is to show a social life and social conditions new to us into which we had stepped. My further purpose is to indicate the lengths to which we must go before we can pat ourselves upon the back as an educated people. When politicians talk about national progress, the world has in mind certain favored commercial activities, and it does not fall into the circle of perceptibility that there are numbers of people who live, and must needs live while things are as they are, lives of toil that leave neither time nor opportunity for the enlargement of life. The truth of science can mean nothing to such people and it is probable that a measure to prohibit the teaching of the sphericity of the earth could be passed if put to vote and made an issue by some eloquent blatherskites, quite as easily as an anti-evolution measure. For what is accepted as diffusion of knowledge as given in schools is, after all, nothing but repetition of words and phrases. It is often the saying of shibboleths, but shibboleths cannot make for development; nor can they arouse a desire for culture; nor can they make for perfection of taste, or for logical discourse, or for skill in argument, or for clear thinking; nor can they train man or woman to an end that there may be striving toward becoming; nor can they give breadth of view, or an abiding sense of justice, or that most necessary of human qualities, self-discipline. We are satisfied to say we know. We accept authority but do not verify. From the angle at which I look at things, the school education of two or three generations has left man exactly as he was, exactly as Shakespeare pictured him. There are still Justice Shallows, and Gobbos, and clowns; only to-day these are able to read, and their literature is cheap trash and vulgar. There are still Jack Cades who burn to achieve atrocities, and who lead wolfish gangs; only their organizations are secret, and they go about in masks and hoods, and they read foamy weeklies edited by ignoramuses who have as aim the stirring up of strife and hatred. There are still the sort that were moved this way by Brutus, then swayed another way by Antony; still the sort whose life aim is money and selfish pleasure; still the sort like Othello, to form opinions lightly and to leap at wrong judgments. There are still learned men who are good, and good men who are not learned. Nor do I believe that the proportion of one sort to the other varies greatly from of old. But I did not come to realize that such was the case until I came to live among the hill-folk and saw how people were when away from all that blatant and glittering setting of the city life. Human nature does not change. What we take for change, seeing people in cities, is the adaptation of human behavior to environment. Environment calls for an appearance, for a certain superficial shrewdness, for a ready, chameleon-like adaptation, but those are a veneer on a mask. Neither a school education nor an increased production of books and magazines and of newspapers has changed man. He does not strive for knowledge, or for efficiency, or for character. His aim is to find the easeful path, only that and nothing more, except in the rarest of cases. In the case of those rare examples, we are forced to believe that men of genius and worth who have lived in remotest historical times would be perfectly en rapport with the alert and active intelligences of to-day, were a meeting possible. But they who so met would be mountain high above the average of contemporary life. And I doubt whether all the alert intelligences gathered throughout the ages, original thinkers and doers of things that have counted, would comfortably fill an ocean liner.

3

I wish I could find it possible to leave out reference to small-town life and sixth-rate schools. I thought to pass it by, but the thing looms large. Perhaps I magnify the effect of lack of discipline, of that shallow vulgarity, of all that gushing insincerity; perhaps my experience has been unfortunate. Taking it by and large, with small-town schools in mind, it has seemed to me that discipline is lacking in educational institutions. Also serious study is unknown. Teachers ignorant of literature of necessity are without power to raise an impulse in their charges to find interest in it. Of that ignorant sort I have met many. Superintendents who are mixers, who are political intriguers, who belong to the booster clubs, who graduate children automatically when the children belong to the best families in town, who are sycophantic in their conduct toward men of wealth and influence, who are noisy in proclamation of the worth of the almighty god Success, these, I say, can never train a generation to honest work and integrity. I have seen many such charlatans, so careless as to be underminers of character, domineering toward their subordinates, too cowardly or too weak to discipline their classes, vain and foolish enough to allow themselves to be flattered by their pupils. I have seen those who professed to know and to teach music playing jazz and ragtime in a moving-picture show. They imposed upon ignorant and well-meaning parents, quenching the fire that might have grown with encouragement and direction. I have seen that sort in power, overbearing and worse toward their intellectual superiors who stood a little way down in the social grade. High priests, they are, of the god of things-as-they-should-not-be, vulgar pretenders, cheats indeed, egotists secure in their political influence. But no one cares. No one is likely to care. In the small town the cloak of the booster covers much rottenness. Boosting covers a multitude of sins. So there are the false and distorted values.

Now I cared very much indeed, so much that I felt the necessity to fight against that pulling-down influence, or at least to do something to offset it, where my own family was concerned. And the savior, as I saw it, had to be the study of literature; literature had to be a pleasure rather than a duty, and the home had to be a congenial place. Therefore as a means to an end I built, as I have said, a reading room with a large open fireplace. That was to be temple and altar. The walls I hung with pictures; mostly drawings done by Somerfield, Honoré, Dougherty, Falls, Pitz, Triedler, Bergman, and some of those artistic photographs done by Field. More correctly speaking many of these were hung on walls in later years, because they were the original of illustrations made for my stories. A good piano and orthophone, with many excellent records, completed the salient furnishings. Then I set to work to choose the books and the parts of books I intended to read aloud, but choice was not made without a guiding rule. For I had come to the conclusion that fictional literature of merit was rich in character creation and that the action grew out of the collision of character and character; that worth-while created characters were as evident as if we lived in their presence. We read many books of travel too, not the sort written by those who go over beaten paths and imagine themselves to be Marco Polos, but books that were a genuine enlargement of experience, life stuff, the sort that make the reader know cold and heat and hunger and thirst, as Doughty, Graham, Scott of the Antarctic, Darwin's *Voyage of the "Beagle."* Presently other youngsters joined our circle, neighbors and university folk, though we made no attempt to increase it. After a time the children, helped by neighbor children who at first had to be pushed on and off stage but soon did creditable work, went in for dramatics by way of Dunsany's *Night at an Inn.* They contrived their own scenic effects, fitted up an outdoor stage, gave very creditable presentations. Later they branched out into puppet theatricals and marionette shows. They played chess, learned to shoot and ride, took mountain walks. Thrown on their own resources for amusement they did very well indeed. In brief, they were in a fair way to become; they were themselves as much as it is possible to be in this interfering age. We discussed books and men and ideas in no pontifical way but genially, and sometimes arrived at strange results. Thus we found it impossible to read *Cloister on the Hearth*, because of its theatric qualities and the way in which one impossible adventure was superimposed upon another, and because in spite of what the professors said the characters did not live for us. They did not stand the tests as did Mrs. Proudie and Rip Van Winkle, and Becky Sharp and Judge Pyncheon.

That family reading led to side reading according to the tastes of the individual. Out of that side reading something was set in motion in the minds of this one and that, after a few will-o'-the-wisps had been followed. One son discovered an aptitude and liking for chemistry work, though he might, I think, with equal success have become a sort of general contractor. He developed a taste for constructive work. A daughter became enthusiastic about books and library work. Another son became interested in archeology and seems to intend making that study his life's work. A second daughter, even as I, could not listen to reading without making pencil sketches, and presently chose art as her life's work. The third boy is too young to have shown any special aptitude. You see, something gleamed from the years' reading awoke minds to aspirations. Something inspired them to confidence in themselves. But mark this. It is important. Through all the years of schooling and college, each one had to work with the hands; this one at farm work and carpentering; this one at poultry and the sheep; the girls at housework.

4

I have said that I turned to writing as a partial means of support. I did not deliberately sit down and contrive a story. I did not invent a situation. The beginnings of things in story writing came from something seen or experienced. My mind played with an idea and out of that there were ramifications, until, with work, the whole resolved itself into a pattern. Let me explain. Riding to town one day with my boys, a great heap of sawdust at the hardwood mill struck me as having the rough appearance of a partially buried sphinx seen in profile. The idea of a sphinx changed to that of a giant beast dragging itself out of primeval slime, and, as my thoughts ran, primeval slime might be in unexplored tropical lands; and unknown tropical lands suggested the Amazon and interior Brazil. I trace the run of ideas further and more particularly. If a monster crawled from primeval slime and the world came to know of it, obviously someone must have witnessed the emergence; and the sight of such a horror might so unnerve the witness that he came to doubt his own sanity. Furthermore, if an advenurer went to an unexplored land, in nine cases out of ten he would be led or taken there by a hope of riches; and riches in equatorial South America suggested Pizarro and the *conquistadores;* and a thought of them brought a thought of the fleeing Incas; and it seemed interesting to give the descendants of the fugitives a tribal memory of a people that came plundering and burning and slaying; and with that tribal memory the mere possession of gold would seem to invite cruelty, so with that folk there would be a shame of gold, and the stuff being found in abundance would be thrust out of sight as a dangerous possession. There, then, was the genesis of the tale which I sent to the *Century*, at that time edited by Glenn Frank and Carl Van Doren, who wired me a congratulation that gave me spiritual nourishment, and sent me a check that gave me material nourishment.

Again: One day, while reading an article by John Fiske, I chanced to grasp a lead pencil in such a way that it was gripped between my first and fourth and my second and third fingers. Presently I found my imagination playing with the idea of thus gripping a vicious and struggling reptile, very poisonous, holding it firmly to prevent it from striking me, my thumb on its throat and the back of its head pressed against my first finger. Gruesome details in connection with an imaginary partner suggested themselves and soon a story grew; but, to get verisimilitude, I wrote it as if I had told the tale to the curator of a museum. It was, I knew, exactly the sort of tale to have delighted Reedy and his *Mirror* readers had the *Mirror* still existed. The only editor I could think of as being likely to favor the tale was Mencken who then edited the *Smart Set*, but having sent it to him he returned it because it lacked romantic interest, meaning thereby sex appeal; or, more accurately, he thought to ensure popularity there should be a female in the dramatis personæ. My viewpoint was, and still is, that woman in the midst of robust adventure in lawless lands constitutes an incongruity. However, Mencken knew his audience and his public better than I, and there could nor can be doubt but that his editing was, and is, a serious business taken seriously. Still, if such a story could not be placed with him, then, as I saw things, it could be placed nowhere. Yet it had to see the light of print. So I had the local printer put it into type and entitled the story *The Lizard God.* I wrote a few brief editorial paragraphs under the head of Free Fantasia, made the whole into a slim periodical then mailed it to thirty-seven of my personal correspondents. It was the first issue of *All's Well.* There were many calls for the paper after it was publicly noticed, and I reprinted two thousand copies. *Current Opinion* reprinted the tale, and so did O'Brien in his annual collection. Hamlin Garland wrote to me asking where I had worked as a curator. W. H. Hudson said pleasant things, and so did Masefield, and the upshot of it all was that I found myself launched on a new and interesting enterprise, and the world full of golden prospects.

CHAPTER III

All's Well

I

SO I COME to tell about my experiment in journalism that was in part a keeping up of the Reedy tradition. But it was more, or it became more. It became a bond of real fellowship. For as I have said, what I hungered for, with a deep and persistent appetite, was whole-souled fellowship of a sort I could not discover in the paths I trod. I had known it in my youth, and had kept up a correspondence with my boyhood friends. I had known it in lawless lands and on ships, but I did not know it in the world of business. I dreamed of a sort of quest for high-spirited men and women, a sort of samurai. I wanted to be in touch with men of high ideals and ideas, but not with narrow-minded men who moved in a wide circle, occupying themselves with isms and ologies and osophies. I started my little magazine, and now it seems to me, looking back, that my life has taken on a vividly exuberant hue because of it. As I turn its pages the periodical becomes a thread on which is strung the pearls of my experiences since I left the commercial world. I have got into touch, through it, with exactly the people I yearned to know, people of intellectual courage and amiability. Because of *All's Well* I have made friends with frank, outspoken, good-natured men and women, and have retained them as friends. Because of it men widely separate have made contact. Its readers are scattered over the land, proud and lonely-seeming people, it might be said. Some I have met in the flesh, then it has been as if I merely renewed acquaintance with those from whom I had parted a short time before. I have found them to be the salt of the earth, the sort to talk quite unaffectedly about the things for which they care and value, but not the sort to go about the world with comfortably settled opinions and theories. I see the *All's Well* circle as a public with cultivated intellect and open mind, one never given to parade, but rather to dissipate prejudice. I see it as a public with a certain flexibility of view, ready to weigh stated opinion, one that does not look upon education merely as a means to a material end; a public of superior culture, a public without dogmas and without harshness of any kind. Its occupation runs the gamut from the executive in high office to the man of the soil. Its monetary condition touches the extremes. Its age lies between twenty and eighty. It has a genius for understanding and knows neither blatancy nor hysteria. And, lest you who read begin to believe that I picture an impossible world of perfection, let me hasten to say that in this nation of a hundred and ten millions, those I describe number between five and six hundred, which, roughly, is about the strength mustered by Thomas B. Mosher when he issued and safely limited the issue of his literary gems. For many are called but few are chosen.

I look through the pages of *All's Well* to get a true perspective of these last seven years, and a perspective is necessary, for this seventh horizon of mine fuses with the sixth. The two run together like spilled paints to form a hue, with two separate and distinct hues at the edges and an indeterminate color at the mingling point.

Turning the pages I see interesting items, such as how my adventures in the writing of books began when Haldeman-Julius swam into my world. He impressed me as a gleeful kind of man, and when he talked about literature I enjoyed his conversation, for he knew his books. When he mounted his hobby horse and told of his idea of popularizing literature, and laid out his plans for inexpensive reprints, I began to vie with him in invention. So we planned tremendously and worked tremendously. The discordant note struck for me in the blatancy of his advertising, but in that from a commercial standpoint he was all right, I all wrong. In business he was fair, and raised the rate of my pay unrequested. He complained bitterly, and with cause, of the condition of my manuscripts, all interlined and crisscrossed and annotated in the margins, with subsidiary passages and afterthoughts pasted to the sides of sheets.

Here is the nearly complete record of my Blue Book activity:

1922
Thoreau: The Man Who Escaped from the Herd
The Story of Lost Civilizations.
Story of the Ice Age
Hints on Short Story Writing
Addison and His Time
Historic Crimes and Criminals
England in Shakespeare's Day
(Sundry articles in *Life and Letters*)

1923
Life of Oscar Wilde
Wilde in Outline
Pepys' Diary
Samuel Johnson and His Time
Story of Napoleon
Story of Confucius
On One Act Plays
Story of Mahomet
Story of Magellan
Baron Munchausen (in brief)
Verne's Five Weeks in a Balloon (in brief)
Marryat's "Privateers" (in brief)
Story of Cellini
Introduction to Arnold's "Empedocles"
Introduction to William Morris's Early Tales

1924
Marryat's "Pirate" (in brief)
Story of Roosevelt
Robin Hood and His Men
Story of Mark Twain
Story of Marco Polo
Free Fantasia on Reading
Introduction to Burton's "Kasidah"
Anatomy of Melancholy (in brief)
Great Adventures
Story of Barnum
A Book of Strange Murders

In such titles as I chose my aim was to try the experiment of interesting the young people in those literary features and things that had so deeply interested me when a boy. Also I enjoyed production. Haldeman-Julius's aim was to make money with his printing press and he was honest enough to say so. It was others, not he, who raised the cry of philanthropist, though the cry being raised he somewhat used as advertising asset the alleged burning desire to free the world from ignorance. He made loud music whenever he seized the public trumpets. I saw Haldeman-Julius as a man with certain exceptional gifts, well-read, intensely practical. In him the man of business overtops the scholar. He has the politician's ability to play a part and to organize a successful campaign. He is as skilled an illusionist as was Barnum, prolific in ideas, tenacious of memory, gifted in being able to focus the public attention. But we could not have run in double harness long, for our directions were opposite. We spoke, Carl Sandburg said, different languages.

My first bound book was *In Lawless Lands*. It was brought out by that extraordinary publicist, Mitchell Kennerley, a close friend of Reedy's, a man with an eye for a beautiful book. But before the manuscript reached Kennerley, it had been lost for six months by another publisher who has since gone bankrupt. Kennerley published with no regard to marketing and only because he liked a piece of work. He concerned himself not at all with advertising or boosting. When he had made a book it had to take care of itself, falling or standing upon its own merits. He would make no contract, would not even promise a date of appearance, however much the author might plead, threaten, abuse, be lofty, solemn, or try to excite a lachrymose sympathy. In the case of *In Lawless Lands* I ran the entire gamut. But with the manuscript he tampered not at all, and no author could lay praise or blame upon the publisher for excellences or shortcomings. As to my book, which sold well enough without a line of advertising, it is a collection of short stories that grew out of remembered incidents or experiences; the scenes of action were laid, for the most part, in South America. In my mind, when writing, the qualities of vigor and interest were uppermost. The most brutal and bloody scenes were not inventions, but were founded on fact. That romantic incidents connected with women form so small a part of the tales is due to the fact that I have a lively sense of incongruity. There were few women in Patagonia, and those were uninteresting. Nor did matters sexual loom very large with men who were active in adventure. I say, again and again, that our modern literature is saturated with misunderstanding when sex appetite is made to appear as almost all engrossing. Somehow we have created a false representation of life in an effort to appear frank, as false as the pastoral mode of depicting life, or as the agreeable dreams of a perfect society told by Bellamy and Morris and the idealists More and Campanella, or as the life depicted by those writers of extraordinary voyages to unknown lands that we encounter in the French literature of the early Eighteenth Century.

Close on the heels of *In Lawless Lands* appeared the book *Highwaymen*, which McBride brought out. I enjoyed tremendously the writing of the stories that composed it, for I took romantic and criminal characters and flung them into a contemporary world among circles literary and artistic and social into which they could never have entered. I reveled in doing that. I introduced Pepys, Walpole, Pope, DeFoe and other characters that had interested me, and I strove heartily for verisimilitude. It was an experiment in fictionalized history carried out with zeal. It was an attempt to do something in the style of the writers who had charmed me in my boyhood, but with their scheme lifted to a higher plane. I had no suspicion that the effort would be taken seriously by anyone. Yet it was. Someone stumbled upon it a year or two later and believed, or his amanuensis did, that a rich and rare vein of curious history had been struck; so he produced a book which Harry Hansen of the New York *World* sent me for review. The unoriginal author of the book had taken my stories and given them a wrench here and a twist there, had put a new name in this place and another in that, had added a frill and a flounce then found a publisher. So arose a storm in a teacup, with lawyer's letters, and threats of suit, and other unpleasantness, and finally a compromise by which the publisher agreed to pay me two thirds of the royalties; there the matter ended. It is of no use to revive the affair by giving names. Anyway the world took the matter very lightly, so did I.

But it will be better to clear the decks by listing the whole output to date.

1921
Choice of the Crowd: An anthology of poems by minor poets

1923
In Lawless Lands: A collection of short stories of wild life
Highwaymen

1924
Bushrangers: Australian outlaws told of
Tales from Silver Lands: tales heard in South America

1927
Romantic Rascals: odd characters
Tales Worth Telling: stories heard in many lands
Spreading Stain: a romance for boys
Ozark Fantasia: a book of essays
Frontier Ballads: songs and music
The Life of David Livingstone
Heroes from Hakluyt

1929
A Man For A' That: life of Burns
Courageous Companions

Now there have been gentlemen of critical ability who found occasion, in reviewing, to take me to task for too active production, but what would they have? I found myself stuffed full of tales, so full indeed that although I should write for twenty years more at the rate I have written for the five years past I would not have told the half of them. Besides, I cannot separate enjoyment from writing. Also vigor has been and is part and parcel of my life. Nor do I find it hopeless drudgery to revise. It is fun searching for an apt phrase or a quietly humorous one, trying experiments in diction, endeavoring to do vigorous writing, aiming to the best of my ability to do honest work. If anything more needs be said, then I add that as I choose to do, so I do; and it has been tremendous fun to write this or that, and to read it aloud to the family. It has been good and wholesome and invigorating to hear the outspoken criticisms of my own children and to accept and reject accordingly. The game of activity has been worth while in this corner of the field as in others, and the only shadow on it, as on other fields, has been when people have imposed their moods and ill-tempers.

In parenthesis, as it were, I wrote some forty articles for Henry Ford's Dearborn *Independent*, a series for *St. Nicholas*, a few articles for the *Red Cross Magazine*, a tale or two for *The American Boy*, an introduction to a book for William Feather who is my beau ideal of a business man, another for Jay G. Sigmund, and another for one of Conrad's novels as published in the Memorial Edition; many book reviews for the New York *World*, the *Herald Tribune*, the *Saturday Review of Literature;* besides the Free Fantasia for *All's Well*, which, like a child needing nourishment, took, and still takes, constant support. Also, as a kind of side activity, I accepted invitations to talk to library students and others, thus visiting Amarillo, Wichita Falls, Dallas, Fort Worth, Beaumont, Galveston and Port Arthur in Texas; Gulf Park College, Mississippi; Helena, in Arkansas; St. Louis; Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Knox College at Galesburg, Illinois, where I was invested with the degree of Doctor of Literature. Then again there was adventure when a publisher sent me a check because he thought that my suggestions of subjects for ten books were good. There was adventure when *Tales from Silver Lands* was awarded the Newbery Medal and I went to Seattle as a guest of Doubleday, Page and Company to receive the honor. There was adventure when *Courageous Companions*, quite recently, was adjudged the winner of the two-thousand-dollar prize offered by Longman's. It opened a way for a visit to Europe.

I do not list such things in any spirit of boasting, nor in any foolish spirit of glow suffusion, as one might say. There were clouds aplenty, disappointments, annoyances, worries. There were cramped financial conditions. There were days without incitement to effort. There were silly distractions. But here is the main thing: I was tied to work in life and always have been, saw to it that I was. Indeed, I would never indulge indolence, nor, I hope, ever shall. For a man has to cultivate somehow a sort of zest. He has to be interested. He must go through life with a lilt, not trudge along. Above all, he must believe in himself, not seeing failure in what are, after all, mere stumbling blocks and quite in the routine of things, but trying his experiment to the end.

But on with the tale lest I preach.

2

In half a hundred places and more and in the pages of *All's Well,* I come upon references which recall associations. There are mentions of meetings with people bound together by common interests, as with literary-minded people at towns where I spoke in public, and with the gathered librarians at Seattle. There I met bright-minded women of aims and ideals, women who got down to the business on hand in no spiritless way. In one place I find a reference to an automobile tour with my friend the Major, as cheerful a time as ever I experienced, and he the sort of man that is glad to amuse and glad to be amused, one full of humor that comes from a healthy sense of proportion. There are many references to Honoré, the artist who illustrated so many books of mine, a man generous, alive to impressions, simple and unaffected but full of wisdom; and to Theodore Dreiser, a great brooding figure of a man with fits of transitory brightness; and to Henry Ford. There is that strange figure "Coin" Harvey who is building a pyramid which, as he hopes, will be opened 30,000 years from now. Much ado he made in the political world in his day as thunder maker for William Jennings Bryan and as originator of the free-silver issue, also of the Bryan theories of anti-imperialism, and of Bryan propaganda for government guarantee of bank deposits; an undistinguished looking man, old-fashioned in every way, shriveled, reclusive, sensitive and drawn into himself, yet of noble and lofty sincerity and disinterested outlook, and full of humility. There are records of a visit from Pierre Loving, a man all fluency of speech, refined, gracious; from Marcet Haldeman-Julius, a woman with strange ability to bring sentiment under the control of reason. And James Stephens, a man of attractive qualities who has worked with his hands, who writes well without scholastic training because of his intellectual curiosity and enthusiasm for exactness and a clear knowledge of what he intends to say; with him I spent a day. Three days later I found myself in the company of a man with all Stephens's sincerity but with an added something that ennobled him so that he seemed to belong to another time. Stephens might have lived with John Ford, or with John Webster. This other, George Sterling, seemed to belong to the time of John Lyly, or Edmund Spenser, or George Herbert; one of those in whom ability and culture seem inborn rather than achieved. Sterling was a man of character and intellectual openness. Some have written of him as a man of mystery, but he did not impress me that way. Rather he made me think of an ice-hidden spring that would burst forth under the warmth of perfect understanding.

"I wanted to talk about things worth while with Masefield," he told me. "But I was frozen. Frozen, you understand. The man who had written *Dauber* could talk of nothing but prohibition." Many things and wonderful Sterling told me, some of them amplifying letters he had written to me. He spoke of the mixture of sincerity and humbug that was Joaquin Miller; of the strange death of Jack London; of the professional mournfulness of Ambrose Bierce; of the knightliness of Charles Erskine Scott Wood so engaged with the all importance of conduct; of the strange insensitiveness of Edgar Lee Masters; of the egotism of Frank Harris, who did not know the difference between self-revelation and self-exposure; of the unostentatious piety of Eugene Debs; of the vigorous understanding of Oswell Garrison Villard; of Mencken's self-discipline, of Upton Sinclair's sincerity; of William Marion Reedy as a latter-day Richard Steele. So we walked and talked, and near midnight there was a hammering at the garden gate on Russian Hill that belonged to a house in which lived Charles Erskine Scott Wood, with his wife and daughter. In spite of my disagreeable persuasion that everybody was in bed, Sterling kept on hammering.

"They're bound to be somewhere," he said, and applied himself again to the door. "The knocking at the gate in *Macbeth*," he added, then supplemented the alarm with whistling.

C. E. S. Wood was as gracious as if he had not been roused from sleep. As for his wife, her welcome made it seem that to be aroused from bed at midnight added to the joy and charm of life. George Sterling took charge of things. I see him now as he prepared to read a ballad about a sea captain which he intended to send to the *American Mercury*. He stood in a corner of the room, his eyes bright and shining, his sensitive hand resting on the edge of the table. He was dynamic.

"Sit down, George!" said Wood. "Sit down and read it. It's not a public meeting."

Sterling waved him into quiet. You must see our host, the author of the *Poet in the Desert*, as a distinguished figure a little reminiscent of Whitman, more reminiscent of Morris. He had the head of a giant, a flowing beard, good gray eyes that beamed kindness. A rippling blue tie made the man a success from a picturesque point of view. And Sara Bard Field, one of those women whose white hair gives them charm that far surpasses the charm of youth, laid her hand on her husband's arm. When Sterling came to an end, Wood spoke.

"Surely your character was not four feet across the shoulders, George!" he said. "No man could be so broad. Consider a little. Why, he could not get in at that door."

"Four feet!" exclaimed Sterling, measuring with his hands a space that might have been twenty-four inches. "Many a man's as broad as that across the shoulders."

Why and how a discussion about the possible breadth of a man's shoulders should lead to talk about civilization and decadence is a mystery, but it did, and the discussion was astonishingly good. It was not talking for talking's sake but a real exposition of views with Wood holding that theocracies and aristocracies had vanished because the views of the majority had not been included in the national consciousness, with Sterling in a state of amazed impatience because money and possessions by modern America were set as a goal.

I see San Francisco as a place of dark and empty streets along which I walked afterwards with Sterling. We came, sometimes, to most surprising places where, a little way ahead, the street seemed to end on the edge of a precipice. That was an illusion due to the hilly steepness of the part of the town that Sterling chose to walk in, and because we walked and talked until three in the morning. Sterling the mystic was uppermost, as I remember, and between talk of philosophical pantheism and the baffling inconclusiveness of atheism there were parenthetical passages with Sterling telling me about the Bohemian Club's annual outing, and about Jack London's poorness as a swimmer, and about the excellence of a lady to whom he had previously introduced me. "But damn her!" he said, "there she was drunk, as you could see for yourself. She's an interesting woman, but she will get drunk. I took Mencken there for a pleasant evening and it was the same thing. Drunk! The rational thing to do 'd be to drown her in the bay." Then his mood changed and he began promising to give me things. Nor did he fail to keep his word, for he brought down to the ferry slip next morning all of the books he had promised, and, what he told me was his great treasure, a death mask of Jack London, of which only three were in existence. But the last subject that we touched upon that night as we stood at the door of a hotel, was suicide. "It's justifiable when a man sees the worthlessness of life," he said. "You've dissipated life's energies and desires. If you don't like life, then open the door. The key is in your hand." So while it shocked, it did not astonish me to learn of George Sterling's suicide. That he had thought the matter out and acted deliberately, I am sure, not only because of what he said, but because of the tone of some of his letters.

3

That this home I have built should be at one and the same time a fortress defended against the unwelcome, and a place of pleasantness for the welcome, that has been my wish and desire. Sometimes the large room in which we gather seems crowded with presences and faintly echoing with the voices of those who have made my home a stopping place; Cornick, a Sir Philip Sidney sort of gentleman; Carl Sandburg, the genius who refuses to grow out of his youth; John Cooper Powys, the gentle scholar; John Gould Fletcher whose eyes are on some faint and radiant ideal of which he will not tell; Laurence Powell, the man whose heart is full of melody, bright-eyed and glad to disregard money for the sake of his star; Cecil Roberts, clean type of clean Englishman who so often dominates in great national affairs; Stuart Olivier, essentially a man of honor, dreaming masterful dreams and making them come true.

There is a passage in *All's Well* that my eye has just lighted upon in which is recounted a visit to St. Louis. There I met Gilbert Frankau who has made some name for himself as a novelist in England, who struck me as being as commonplace a man as I had ever met. A very pushful young Jew, he, talking about how he had seen a man hanged, how much money he made. There was young Richard Halliburton who had traveled in the more settled places and written a book about himself and them in a Heine-Hearn style, who seemed to imagine himself a Marco Polo. Halliburton dwarfed the background. In an upper room of the Mayfair Hotel Opie Reid sat in a state of extreme mellowness in his shirt sleeves, tobacco grains and pipe ash spilled over his vest and pants. How the man talked! And how he had read! There was something immensely large about him just as there was something immensely large about William Morris. His was the Athenian spirit given to mental exploration, to the search of excellence. On the same day I dined with Herbert Hadley, one of the noblest school of men, whose graphic picture of Rome had made a vanished civilization stand before my eyes with photographic clearness. Then there was Stuart P. Sherman, all manliness and fairness and good sense, full of rectitude of purpose, whom the fates snatched away a few days afterwards. And Bob Davis; I met him at the house of a friend and it seemed impossible that a man so gifted, so truly observant, so easily accessible that to talk with him was to experience a sense of contact and geniality, should have spent his life augmenting the fortunes of an intellectual inferior. Like Don Seitz, Davis is permeated with a certain Pepysian quality. Both men have to record their own times, but Seitz confines himself to historical and major political characters; Davis enjoys the festival of life with all sorts and conditions of men, high and low, tough and cultivated, and can be charming and genial with them. You would say, knowing Bob Davis intimately, that for all his worldly shrewdness, there is a certain guilelessness about him.

But make no mistake. I do not hold men excellent because they have written books. Some with the literary gift I have found very second or third rate, even banal.

But I put aside *All's Well* with a last flutter of leaves, not very readily, though, because it is a true record of how I see the world in which I move, from this, my sixth horizon. I met, for instance, Carl Sandburg, and a product of the Detroit underworld conducted the pair of us to his place of crime and filth where we saw creatures malign and unfortunate; but I fled before midnight because of sheer boredom, while Sandburg, wide-eyed and interested, but spending no money, continued to regard it as a pageant. I see that I spent a day with Upton Sinclair, the only knight left to draw a sword for socialism and the old Utopian school, as courageous an exponent as ever lived. I went to the Gulf Coast to look at the degenerate Cajun people and, lo and behold! I discovered at Gulfport, Mississippi, an ideal school managed by people of vision who hold that a disciplined mind is the greatest of possessions; not only hold the opinion but try with all their might to put it into practice. I met General Tasker Bliss and found a gentle soul, music-loving, moved almost to tears when Michael Monahan, somewhat on the far side of extreme mellowness, recited "Bells of Shandon" while I improvised a piano *obbligato*. I attended a meeting of the I. W. W. and listened to John Reed, exuberant, full of the vivid spirit of youth, all compact of ardent thoughts and generous dreams, but starting to leave an *agent provocateur* accosted me. Captain Tom Hickman of the Texas Rangers told me about his meeting with Cunninghame

Graham, and we went to the Dallas jail where we talked with the outlaw Yancey Storey who had played a sort of Ned Kelly game. I see that I visited Ed Howe who philosophizes in Kansas, and carries a banner for old-fashioned ideas of conduct with aggressive brilliance. There comes back, too, because of that fluttering of leaves, an impression of a fine gathering of men and women in Columbus, Ohio, when the Kit Kat Club made me a life, honorary member, and when, at the reception, a well-dressed young man came up and shook me by the hand saying that he owed much to me because years before I had put him in the way of good reading. I shared, too, in a modest kind of way, in the glory that came to David Guion whose compositions are gradually winning their way. To be sure I did nothing much for him except to discover him, for his was a heaven-born genius. But I gained unearned credit for something in his musical career, and we worked upon a couple of songs that Schirmer brought out and which Werrenrath sang, and he composed a Concert Valse which he dedicated to me. So the pages of *All's Well* are rich in reminiscence where latter years are concerned. And much it concerns, and has always concerned, itself with current literature. Indeed, scanning, remembering books that were hailed with a blare of trumpets to fall still-born from the press, noting how the reading world obediently follows the lead of this one or that, as it did in the case of Galsworthy who in an unguarded moment praised *Trader Horn* and made the book sell by shoals; remembering similar instances, names shouted and forgotten, reputations created to be swept away, literature has the appearance of a troubled and choppy sea. A wave rises, is seen, sinks. We chop down entire forests to make the paper for magazines and books, but what becomes of the books? In effect, our passion for that which is new in literature is nothing but a sort of destruction. It is, at bottom, the burning down of forests; out of that destruction to snatch something worth while—there's the task. To be able to know and appreciate the worthwhile is the paramount need. I have found myself eager to seize something, a worth-while passage, an aphorism, a poem in some corner of a newspaper.

4

Now I do not wonder what it is all about. I do not think that all those speculative theories with which we engaged ourselves were for nothing. I am convinced that all the marching from this horizon to a further one availed something. But one gathers and gathers, in the beginning. One is like an inventor, say the inventor of a machine for the transmission of messages. At first he must needs load himself down with wheels and springs and cables and chemicals and insulated wires and quite unnecessary return circuits with poles and what not. He must needs lay his cable underseas; to do that there must be built giant steamships, and an army of men gathered, with officials and rules and regulations. Then comes the time of elimination, the stripping down to bare essentials, the discarding of numberless props. In the end the necessary machinery for message transmission can be contained in a small box.

It seems to me that my life's duty fines down to a commonplace simplicity. To achieve order in my immediate vicinity: that comes first. To resist invasion: that is second and tremendously important. And last: to assume such obligations as shall enure to the physical and intellectual welfare of my children, to the end that they may become happy warriors fit to engage in the battle of life. That's all. That last is my seventh horizon and I can expect no more than to see it, and to march toward it, stumbling and slow perhaps because of the long journey, but the gods helping, going on and on, somewhat tired perhaps at sunset, but never sitting down to wail in despair by the wayside.

THE END

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